THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA,

OF

ISPAHAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.

Hajji Baba reaches Ispahan, and his paternal roof, just time enough to close the eyes of his dying father - - - Page 1

CHAPTER II.

He becomes heir to property which is not to be found, and his suspicions thereon - - 24

CHAPTER III.

Showing the steps he takes to discover his property, and who the diviner, Teez Negah, was - 36

CHAPTER IV.

Of the diviner's success in making discoveries, and of the resolution which Hajji Baba takes in consequence - - - - 48

CHAPTER V.

Hajji Baba quits his mother, and becomes the scribe to a celebrated man of the law Page 60

CHAPTER VI.

The mollah Nadân gives an account of his new scheme for raising money, and for making men happy - - - - 71

CHAPTER VII.

Hajji Baba becomes a promoter of matrimony, and of the register he keeps - - 81

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the man Hajji Baba meets, thinking him dead; and of the marriage he brings about - 90

CHAPTER IX.

Showing how the ambition of the mollah Nadân involves both him and his disciples in ruin 103

CHAPTER X.

Hajji Baba meets with an extraordinary adventure in the bath, which miraculously saves him from the horrors of despair - - - 115

CHAPTER XI.

Of the consequences of the adventure, which threaten danger, but end in apparent good fortune Page 126

CHAPTER XII.

Hajjî Baba does not shine in honesty. The life and adventures of the mollah Nadân - 137

CHAPTER XIII.

Hajjî and the mollah make plans suited to their critical situation, showing that no confidence can exist between rogues - - - 163

CHAPTER XIV.

The punishment due to Hajjî Baba falls upon Nadân, which makes the former a stanch predestinarian - - - - 175

CHAPTER XV.

Hajjî Baba hears an extraordinary sequel to his adventure in the bath, and feels all the alarms of guilt - - - - - 183

CHAPTER XVI.

He is discovered and seized, but his good stars again befriend and set him free - Page 197

CHAPTER XVII.

He reaches Bagdad, meets his first master, and turns his views to commerce - - 206

CHAPTER XVIII.

He purchases pipe-sticks, and inspires a hopeless passion in the breast of his old master's daughter 216

CHAPTER XIX.

He becomes a merchant, leaves Bagdad, and accompanies a caravan to Constantinople - 225

CHAPTER XX.

Hajjî Baba makes a conquest of the widow of an Emir, which at first alarms, but afterwards elates him - - - - 233

CHAPTER XXI.

He obtains an interview with the fair Shekerleb, makes a settlement upon her, and becomes her husband - - - - 247

CHAPTER XXII.

From a vender of pipe-sticks he becomes a rich Aga, but feels all the inconvenience of supporting a false character - - Page 258

CHAPTER XXIII.

His desire to excite envy lays the foundation of his disgrace. He quarrels with his wife - 266

CHAPTER XXIV.

He is discovered to be an impostor, loses his wife, and the wide world is again before him - 275

CHAPTER XXV.

An incident in the street diverts his despair; he seeks consolation in the advice of old Osman 286

CHAPTER XXVI.

In endeavouring to gain satisfaction from his enemies he acquires a friend. Some account of Mirza Firouz - - - 295

CHAPTER XXVII.

He becomes useful to an ambassador, who makes him a partaker of his confidence - - 304

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of his first essays in public life, and of the use he was of to his employer - - Page 315

CHAPTER XXIX.

Hajji Baba writes the History of Europe, and with his ambassador returns to Persia - 331

CHAPTER XXX.

The ceremony of receiving a Frank ambassador at the court of the Shah is described - - 343

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hajji is noticed by the grand vizier, and is the means of gratifying that minister's favourite passion - - - - 353

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of the manner in which he turned his influence to use, and how he was again noticed by the vizier 363

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The conclusion. Misfortune seems to take leave of Hajji Baba, who returns to his native city a greater man than when he first left it - 371

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA.

CHAPTER I.

Hajji Baba reaches Ispahan, and his paternal roof, just time enough to close the eyes of his dying father.

I DID not require to be twice ordered to depart; and, without once looking behind me, I left Kom and its priests, and bent my steps towards Ispahan and my family. I had a few *reals* in my pocket, with which I could buy food on the road; and, as for resting-places, the country was well supplied with caravanserais, in which I could always find a corner to lay my head. Young as I was, I began to be disgusted with the world; and perhaps had I remained long

enough at Kom, and in the mood in which I had reached it, I might have devoted the rest of my life to following the lectures of Mirza Abdul Cossim, and acquired worldly consideration by my taciturnity, by my austerity, and strict adherence to Mahomedan discipline. But fate had woven another destiny for me. The *maidan* (the race-course) of life was still open to me, and the courser of my existence had not yet exhausted half of the bounds and curvets with which he was wont to keep me in constant exercise. I felt that I deserved much of the misfortunes with which I had been afflicted, owing to my total neglect of my parents.

'I have been a wicked son,' said I. 'When I was a man in authority, and was puffed up with pride at my own importance, I then forgot the poor barber at Ispahan; and it is only now, when adversity spreads my path, that I recollect the authors of my being.' A saying of my schoolmaster, which he frequently quoted

with great emphasis in Arabic, came to my mind. 'An old friend,' used he to say, 'is not to be bought, even if you had the treasures of Hatem to offer for one. Remember then, O youth, that thy first, and therefore thy oldest friends are thy father and thy mother.'

'They shall still find that they have a son,' said I, feeling a great rush of tenderness flow into my heart, as I repeated the words; 'and, please God, if I reach my home, they shall no longer have to reproach me with want of proper respect.' A still soft voice, however, whispered to me that I should be too late; and I remembered the prognostics of my mind, when, filled with grief for the loss of Zeenab, I left Tehran full of virtuous intentions and resolutions.

When I could first distinguish the peak in the mountain of the *Colah Cazi*, which marks the situation of Ispahan, my heart bounded within me; and at every step

I anxiously considered in what state I should find my family.—Would my old schoolmaster be alive?—Should I find our neighbour the *Baqal* (or chandler), at whose shop I used to spend in sweetmeats all the copper money that I could purloin from my father, when I shaved for him, would he be still in existence?—And my old friend the *Capiji*, the door-keeper of the caravanserai, he whom I frightened so much at the attack of the Turcomans, is the door of his life still open, or has it been closed upon him for ever?

In this manner did I muse by the way side, until the tops of the *minarets* of Ispahan actually came in view; when, enraptured with the sight, and full of gratitude for having been preserved thus far in my pilgrimage, I stopt and said my prayers; and then taking up one stone, which I placed upon another as a memorial, I made the following vow: 'O Ali, if thou wilt grant to thy humblest and most abject of slaves

the pleasure of reaching my home in safety, I will, on arrival, kill a sheep, and make a pilau for my friends and family.'

Traversing the outskirts of the city with a beating heart, every spot was restored to my memory, and I threaded my way through the long vaulted bazars and intricate streets without missing a single turn, until I found myself standing opposite both my father's shop, and the well-known gate of the caravanserai.

The door of the former was closed, and nothing was stirring around it that indicated business. I paused a long time before I ventured to proceed, for I looked upon this first aspect of things as portentous of evil; but, recollecting myself, I remembered that it was the *Sheb-i-Jumah*, the Friday eve, and that probably my father, in his old age, had grown to be too scrupulous a Mussulman to work during those hours which true believers ought to keep holy.

However, the caravanserai was open, and

presented the same scene to my eyes which it had done ever since I had known it. Bales of goods heaped up in lots, intermixed with mules, camels, and their drivers.—Groups of men in various costumes, some seated, some in close conversation, others gazing carelessly about, and others again coming and going in haste, with faces full of care and calculation. I looked about for the friend of my boyhood the Capiji, and almost began to fear that he too had closed his door, when I perceived his well-known figure crawling quietly along with his earthen water-pipe, seeking his bit of charcoal wherewith to light it.

His head had sunk considerably between his shoulders, and reclined more upon his breast since last I had seen him; and the additional bend in his knees showed that the passing years had kept a steady reckoning with him.

'It is old Ali Mohamed,' said I, as I stepped up towards him. 'I should know that crooked nose of his from a thousand,

so often have I clipped the whisker that grows under it.'

When I accosted him with the usual salutation of peace, he kept on trimming his pipe, without even looking up, so much accustomed was he to be spoken to by strangers; but when I said, 'Do not you recognize me, Ali Mohamed?' he turned up his old bloodshot eye at me, and pronounced 'Friend! a caravanserai is a picture of the world; men come in and go out of it, and no account is taken of them. How am I then to know you?—Ali Mohamed is grown old, and his memory is gone by.'

'But you will surely recollect Hajjî Baba—little Hajjî, who used to shave your head, and trim your beard and mustachios!'

'There is but one God!' exclaimed the door-keeper in great amazement. 'Are you indeed Hajjî?—Ah! my son, your place has long been empty—are you come at last? Well, then, praise be to Ali, that old Ker-

belai Hassan will have his eyes closed by his only child, ere he dies.'

'How!' said I, 'tell me where is my father? Why is the shop shut? What do you say about death?

'Yes, Hajjî, the old barber has shaved his last. Lose not a moment in going to his house, and you may stand a chance to be in time to receive his blessing ere he leaves this world. Please God, I shall soon follow him, for all is vanity. I have opened and shut the gates of this caravanserai for fifty years, and find that all pleasure is departed from me. My keys retain their polish, whilst I wear out with rust.'

I did not stop to hear the end of the old man's speech, but immediately made all speed to my father's house.

As I approached the well-remembered spot, I saw two Mollahs loitering near the low and narrow entrance.

'Ha!' thought I, 'ye are birds of ill-omen; wherever the work of death is going on, there ye are sure to be.'

Entering, without accosting them, I walked at once into the principal room, which I found completely filled with people, surrounding an old man, who was stretched out upon a bed spread upon the floor, and whom I recognized to be my father.

No one knew me, and as it is a common custom for strangers who have nothing to do with the dying to walk in unasked, I was not noticed. On one side sat the doctor, and on the other an old man, who was kneeling near the bed-head, and in him I recognized my former schoolmaster. He was administering comfort to his dying friend, and his words were something to this purpose: 'Do not be downcast: please God you still have many days to spend on earth. You may still live to see your son; Hajjî Baba may yet be near at hand. But yet it is a proper and a fortunate act to make your will, and to appoint your heir. If such be your wish, appoint any one here present your heir.'

'Ah,' sighed out my father, 'Hajjî has

abandoned us—I shall never see him more—He has become too much of a personage to think of his poor parents—He is not worthy that I should make him my heir.'—These words produced an immediate effect; I could no longer restrain my desire to make myself known, and I exclaimed, 'Hajjî is here!—Hajjî is come to receive your blessing—I am your son—do not reject him!'—

Upon which I knelt down by the bedside, and taking up the dying man's hand, I kissed it, and added loud sobs and lamentations, to demonstate my filial affection.

The sensation which I produced upon all present was very great. I saw looks of disappointment in some, of incredulity in others, and of astonishment in all.

My father's eyes, that were almost closed, brightened up for one short interval as he endeavoured to make out my features, and clasping his trembling hands together, exclaimed, '*Il hem dillah!* Praise be to God, I have seen my son, I have got an heir!'—Then addressing me, he said, 'Have you

done well, O my son, to leave me for so many years? Why did you not come before?'

He would have gone on, but the exertion and the agitation produced by such an event were too much for his strength, and he sunk down inanimate on his pillow.

'Stop,' said my old schoolmaster, who had at once recognised me—'stop, Hajjî; say no more: let him recover himself; he has still his will to make.'

'Yes,' said a youngish man, who had eyed me with looks of great hostility—'yes, we have also still to see whether this is Hajjî Baba, or not.' I afterwards found he was son to a brother of my father's first wife, and had expected to inherit the greatest part of the property; and when I inquired who were the other members of the assembly, I found that they were all relations of that stamp, who had flocked together in the hope of getting a share of the spoil, of which I had now deprived them.

They all seemed to doubt whether I was

myself, and perhaps would have unanimously set me down for an impostor, if the schoolmaster had not been present: and from his testimony there was no appeal.

However, all doubts as to my identity were immediately hushed when my mother appeared, who, having heard of my arrival, could no longer keep to the limits of her anderûn, but rushed into the assembly with extended arms and a flowing veil, exclaiming, 'Where, where is he? where is my son?—Hajjî, my soul, where art thou?'

As soon as I had made myself known, she threw herself upon my neck, weeping aloud, making use of every expression of tenderness which her imagination could devise, and looking at me from head to foot with an eagerness of stare, and an impetuosity of expression, that none but a mother can command.

In order to rouse my father from the lethargy into which he had apparently fallen, the doctor proposed administering a cordial, which, having prepared, he endeavoured to

pour down his throat; during the exertion of raising the body, the dying man sneezed once, which every one present knew was an omen so bad, that no man in his senses would dare venture to give the medicine until two full hours had expired: therefore, it remained in the cup.

After having waited the expiration of the two hours, the medicine was again attempted to be administered, when, to the horror of all present, and to the disappointment of those who expected that he should make his will, he was found to be stone dead.

'In the name of Allah, arise,' said the old Mollah to him; 'we are now writing your will.' He endeavoured to raise my father's head, but to no purpose; life had entirely fled.

Water steeped in cotton was then squeezed into his mouth, his feet were carefully placed towards the Kebleh, and as soon as it was ascertained that no farther hope was left, the priest at his bed-head began to read the Koran in a loud and sing-song emphasis.

A handkerchief was then placed under his chin, fastened over his head, and his two great toes were also tied together. All the company then pronounced the *Kelemeh Shehâdet* (the profession of faith), a ceremony which was supposed to send him out of this world a pure and well-authenticated Mussulman; and during this interval a cup of water was placed upon his head.

All these preliminaries having been duly performed, the whole company, composed of what were supposed to be his friends and relations, gathered close round the corpse, and uttered loud and doleful cries. This was a signal to the two Mollahs (whom I before mentioned), who had mounted on the house-top, and they then began to chant out in a sonorous cadence portions of the Koran, or verses used on such occasions, and which are intended as a public notification of the death of a true believer.

The noise of wailing and lamentation now became general, for it soon was communicated to the women, who, collected in a

separate apartment, gave vent to their grief after the most approved forms. My father, from his gentleness and obliging disposition, had been a great favourite with all ranks of people, and my mother, who herself was a professional mourner, and a principal performer at burials, being well acquainted with others of her trade, had managed to collect such a band around her on this occasion, that no Khan, it was said, ever had so much mourning performed for him on his death-day as my father.

As for me, whose feelings had previously been set to the pitch-pipe of misfortune, I became a real and genuine mourner; and the recollection of all the actions of my life, in which my total neglect of my parents made so conspicuous a figure, caused me to look upon myself in no enviable light.

I was seated quietly in a corner, adding my sincere sobs to the artificial ones of the rest of the whole company, when a priest came up to me, and said, that of course it was necessary for me to tear my clothes, as

I could not prove myself to be a good son without so doing, and that if I permitted him, he would perform that operation for me without spoiling my coat.

I let him do what he required, and he accordingly ripped open the seam of the breast flap, which then hung down some three or four inches. He also told me that it was the custom to keep the head uncovered, and the feet naked, at least until all the ceremonies of burial had been performed.

To this I freely consented, and had the satisfaction afterwards to learn, that I was held up as the pattern of a good mourner.

My mother's grief was outrageous: her hair was concealed, and she enveloped her head in a black shawl, making exclamations expressive of her anguish, calling upon the name of her husband.

By this time the neighbours, the passers by, the known or unknown to the family, flocked round the house for the purpose of either reading the Koran or hearing it read,

which is also esteemed a meritorious act on that occasion. Among these, many came in the character of comforters, who, by their knowledge in the forms of speech best adapted to give consolation, are looked upon as great acquisitions in the event of a mourning.

My old schoolmaster, an eminent comforter, took me in hand, and, seating himself by my side, addressed me in the following words:

'Yes, at length your father is dead. So be it. What harm is done? Is not death the end of all things? He was born, he got a son, he ran his course, and died. Who can do more? You now take his place in the world; you are the rising blade, that with millions of others promise a good harvest, whilst he is the full ripened ear of corn, that has been cut down and gathered into the granary. Ought you to repine at what is a subject for joy? Instead of shaving men's heads, he is now seated between two Houris, drinking milk

and eating honey. Ought you to weep at that? No; rather weep that you are not there also. But why weep at all? Consider the many motives for which, on the contrary, you have to rejoice. He might have been an unbeliever—but he was a true Mussulman. He might have been a Turk—but he was a Persian. He might have been a Sûni—but he was a Shiah. He might have been an unclean Christian—he was a lawful son of Islam. He might have died accursed like a Jew—he has resigned his breath with the profession of the true faith in his mouth. All these are subjects of joy!'

After this manner did he go on; and, having expended all he had to say, left me, to join his voice to the general wailing.

Those unclean men, the *mûrdeshûr*, or washers of the dead, were then called in, who brought with them the bier, in which the corpse was to be carried to the grave. I was consulted, whether they should make an *imareh* of it, which is a sort of canopy,

adorned with black flags, shawls, and other stuffs—a ceremony practised only in the burials of great personages; but I referred the decision to my friend the schoolmaster, who immediately said, that considering my worthy father to have been a sort of public character, he should certainly be for giving him such a distinction. This was accordingly done; and the corpse having been brought out by the distant relations, and laid therein, it was carried to the place of ablution, where it was delivered over to the washers, who immediately went to work. The body was first washed with clear cold water, then rubbed over with lime, salt, and camphor, placed in the winding-sheet, again consigned to the bier, and at length conveyed to the place of burial.

The many who offered themselves to carry the body, was a proof how much my father must have been beloved. Even strangers feeling that it was a praiseworthy action to carry a good Mussulman

to the grave, pressed forward to lend their shoulder to the burthen, and by the time it had reached its last resting-place, the crowd was considerable.

I had followed at a small distance, escorted by those who called themselves friends and relations; and after a mollah had said a prayer, accompanied by the voices of all present, I was invited, as the nearest relative, to place the body in the earth, which having done, the ligatures of the winding-sheet were untied, and another prayer, called the *talkhi*, was pronounced. The twelve Imams, in rotation, were then invoked; and the *talkhi* being again read, the grave was covered in.—After this, the *Fatheh* (the first chapter of the Koran) was repeated by all present, and the grave having been sprinkled over with water, the whole assembly dispersed, to meet again at the house of the deceased.—A priest remained, at the head of the grave, praying.

I was now called upon to act a part. I

had become the principal personage in the tragedy, and an involuntary thought stole into my mind.

'Ah,' said I, 'the vow which I made upon first seeing the city must now be performed, whether I will or no. I must spend boldly, or I shall be esteemed an unnatural son;' therefore, when I returned to the house, I blindly ordered every thing to be done in a handsome manner.

Two rooms were prepared, one for the men, the other for the women. According to the received custom, I, as chief mourner, gave an entertainment to all those who had attended the funeral; and here my sheep and my pilau were not forgotten. I also hired three mollahs, two of whom were appointed to read the Koran in the men's apartment, and the other remained near the tomb, for the same purpose, inhabiting a small tent, which was pitched for his use. The length of the mourning, which lasts, according to the means of the family, three, five, seven days, or even a month, I fixed

at five days, during which each of the relations gave an entertainment. At the end of that period, some of the elders, both men and women, went round to the mourners, and sewed up their rent garments, and on that day I was again invited to give an entertainment, when separate sheets of the Koran were distributed throughout the whole assembly, and read by each individual, until the whole of the sacred volume had been completely gone through.

After this my mother, with several of her relations and female friends, proceeded in a body to my father's tomb, taking with them sweetmeats, and bread baked for the purpose, which they distributed to the poor, having partaken thereof themselves. They then returned, weeping and bewailing.

Two or three days having elapsed, my mother's friends led her to the bath, where they took off her mourning, put her on a clean dress, and dyed her feet and hands with the *khena*.

This completed the whole of the ceremonies: and, much to my delight, I was now left to myself, to regulate my father's affairs, and to settle plans for my own future conduct.

CHAPTER II.

He becomes heir to property which is not to be found, and his suspicions thereon.

My father having died without a will, I was, of course, proclaimed his sole heir without any opposition, and consequently, all those who had aspired to be sharers of his property, balked by my unexpected appearance, immediately withdrew to vent their disappointment in abusing me. They represented me as a wretch, devoid of all respect for my parents, as one without religion, an adventurer in the world, and the companion of *Lûties* and wandering dervishes.

As I had no intention of remaining at Ispahan, I treated their endeavours to hurt me with contempt; and consoled myself by giving them a full return of all their scurrility, by expressions which neither they nor their fathers had ever heard; expressions

which I had picked up from amongst the illustrious characters with whom I had passed the first years of my youth.

When we were left to ourselves, my mother and I, after having bewailed in sufficiently pathetic language, she the death of a husband, I the loss of a father, the following conversation took place:—

'Now tell me, O my mother—for there can be no secrets between us—tell me what was the state of Kerbelai Hassan's concerns. He loved you, and confided in you, and you must therefore be better acquainted with them than any one else.'

'What do I know of them, my son?' said she, in great haste, and seeming confusion.

I stopt her, to continue my speech. 'You know that according to the law, his heir is bound to pay his debts:—they must be ascertained. Then, the expenses of the funeral are to be defrayed; they will be considerable; and at present I am as destitute of means as on the day you gave me

birth. To meet all this, money is necessary; or else both mine and my father's name will be disgraced among men, and my enemies will not fail to overcome me. He must have been reputed wealthy, or else his death-bed would never have been surrounded by that host of blood-suckers and time-servers which have been driven away by my presence. You, my mother, must tell me where he was accustomed to deposit his ready cash; who were, or who are, likely to be his debtors; and what might be his possessions, besides those which are apparent.'

'Oh, Allah!' exclaimed she, 'what words are these? Your father was a poor, good man, who had neither money nor possessions. Money, indeed! We had dry bread to eat, and that was all! Now and then, after the arrival of a great caravan, when heads to be shaved were plentiful, and his business brisk, we indulged in our dish of rice, and our skewer of *kabob*, but otherwise we lived like beggars. A bit of bread, a morsel of

cheese, an onion, a basin of sour curds—that was our daily fare; and, under these circumstances, can you ask me for money, ready money too? There is this house, which you see and know; then his shop, with its furniture; and when I have said that, I have nearly said all. You are just arrived in time, my son, to step into your father's shoes, and take up his business; and *Inshallah*, please God, may your hand be fortunate! may it never cease wagging, from one year's end to the other!'

'This is very strange! exclaimed I, in my turn. 'Fifty years, and more, hard and unceasing toil! and nothing to show for it! This is incredible! We must call in the diviners.'

'The diviners?' said my mother, in some agitation; 'of what use can they be? They are only called in when a thief is to be discovered. You will not proclaim your mother a thief, Hajjî, will you? Go, make inquiries of your friend, and your father's friend, the

âkhon *. He is acquainted with the whole of the concerns, and I am sure he will repeat what I have said.'

'You do not speak amiss, mother,' said I. 'The âkhon probably does know what were my father's last wishes, for he appeared to be the principal director in his dying moments; and he may tell me, if money there was left, where it is to be found.'

Accordingly I went straightway to seek the old man, whom I found seated precisely in the very same corner of the little parish mosque, surrounded by his scholars, in which some twenty years before I myself had received his instructions. As soon as he saw me he dismissed his scholars, saying, that my footsteps were fortunate, and that others, as well as himself, should partake of the pleasure which I was sure to dispense wherever I went.

'Ahi, âkhon,' said I, 'do not laugh at

* A Mollah who is a schoolmaster is also styled *âkhon*.

my beard. My good fortune has entirely forsaken me; and even now, when I had hoped that my destiny, in depriving me of my father, had made up the loss by giving me wealth, I am likely to be disappointed, and to turn out a greater beggar than ever.'

'*Allah kerim*, God is merciful,' said the schoolmaster; and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, whilst he placed his hands on his knees, with their palms uppermost, he exclaimed, 'Oh, Allah, whatever is, thou art it.' Then addressing himself to me, he said, 'Yes, my son, such is the world, and such will it ever be, as long as man shuts not up his heart from all human desires.—Want nothing, seek nothing, and nothing will seek you.'

'How long have you been a *sûfi*,' said I, 'that you talk after this manner? I can speak on that subject also, since my evil star lead me to Kom, but now I am engrossed with other matters.' I then informed him of the object of my visit, and requested him to tell me what he knew of my father's concerns.

Upon this question he coughed, and, making up a face of great wisdom, went through a long string of oaths and professions, and finished by repeating what I had heard from my mother; namely, that he believed my father to have died possessed of no *(nagd)*, ready cash (for that, after all, was the immediate object of my search); and what his other property was, he reminded me that I knew as well as himself.

I remained mute for some time with disappointment, and then expressed my surprise in strong terms. My father, I was aware, was too good a Mussulman to have lent out his money upon interest, for I recollected a circumstance, when I was quite a youth, which proved it. Osman Aga, my first master, wanting to borrow a sum from him, for which he offered an enormous interest, my father put his conscience into the hands of a rigid mollah, who told him that the precepts of the Koran entirely forbade it. Whether since that time he had relaxed his principles, I could not say; but I was assured that he always set his

face against the unlawful practice of taking interest, and that he died, as he had lived, a perfect model of a true believer.

I left the mosque in no very agreeable mood, and took my way to the spot where I had made my first appearance in life, namely, my father's shop, turning over in my mind as I went what steps I should take to secure a future livelihood. To remain at Ispahan was out of the question—the place and the inhabitants were odious to me;—therefore, it was only left me to dispose of every thing that was now my own, and to return to the capital, which, after all, I knew to be the best market for an adventurer like myself. However, I could not relinquish the thought that my father had died possessed of some ready money, and suspicions would haunt my mind, in spite of me, that foul play was going on somewhere or other. I was at a loss to whom to address myself, unknown as I was in the city, and I was thinking of making my case known to the Cadi, when,

approaching the gate of the caravanserai, I was accosted by the old *Capiji*. 'Peace be unto you, Aga!' said he; 'may you live many years, and may your abundance increase! My eyes are enlightened by seeing you.'

'Are your spirits so well wound up, Ali Mohamed,' said I in return, 'that you choose to treat me thus? As for the abundance you talk of, 'tis abundance of grief, for I have none other that I know of. Och!' said I, sighing, 'my liver has become water, and my soul has withered up.'

'What news is this?' said the old man. 'Your father (peace be unto him!) is just dead—you are his heir—you are young, and, *Mashallah!* you are handsome—your wit is not deficient:—what do you want more?'

'I am his heir, 'tis true; but what of that? —what advantage can accrue to me, when I only get an old mud-built house, with some worn-out carpets, some pots and pans and decayed furniture, and yonder shop

with a brass basin and a dozen of razors? Let me spit upon such an inheritance.'

'But where is your money, your ready cash, Hajjî? Your father (God be with him!) had the reputation of being as great a niggard of his money as he was liberal of his soap. Every body knows that he amassed much, and never passed a day without adding to his store.'

That may be true,' said I; 'but what advantage will that be to me, since I cannot find where it was deposited? My mother says that he had none—the âkhon repeats the same—I am no conjuror to discover the truth. I had it in my mind to go to the Cadi.'

'To the Cadi?' said Ali Mohamed. 'Heaven forbid! Go not to him—you might as well knock at the gate of this caravanserai, when I am absent, as try to get justice from him, without a heavy fee. No, he sells it by the miscal, at a heavy price, and very light weight does he give after all.—He does not turn over one leaf of the Koran,

until his fingers have been well plated with gold, and if those who have appropriated your father's sacks are to be your opponents, do not you think that they will drain them into the Cadi's lap, rather than he should pronounce in your favour?'

'What, then, is to be done?' said I. 'Perhaps the diviners might give me some help.'

'There will be no harm in that,' answered the door-keeper. 'I have known them make great discoveries during my service in this caravanserai. Merchants have frequently lost their money, and found it again through their means.—It was only in the attack of the Turcomans, when much property was stolen, that they were completely at their wits' end. Ah! that was a strange event. It brought much misery on my head; for some were wicked enough to say that I was their accomplice, and, what is more extraordinary, that you were amongst them, Hajjî!—for it was on account of your name, which the dog's son

made use of to induce me to open the gate, that the whole mischief was produced.'

Lucky was it for me, that old Ali Mohamed was very dull of sight, or else he would have remarked strange alterations in my features when he made these observations. However, our conference ended by his promising to send me the most expert diviner of Ispahan; 'a man,' said he, 'who would entice a piece of gold out of the earth, if buried twenty *gez* deep, or even if it was hid in the celebrated * well of Kashan.'

* It is a popular belief, that near the city of Kashan there exists a well, of fabulous depth, at the bottom of which are found enchanted groves and gardens.

CHAPTER III.

Showing the steps he takes to discover his property, and who the diviner, Teez Negah, was.

The next morning, soon after the first prayers, a little man came into my room, whom I soon discovered to be the diviner. He was a humpback, with an immense head, with eyes so wonderfully brilliant, and a countenance so intelligent, that I felt he could look through and through me at one glance. He wore a dervish's cap, from under which flowed a profusion of jet black hair, which, added to a thick bush of a beard, gave an imposing expression to his features. His eyes, which by a quick action of his eyelid (whether real or affected, I know not), twinkled like stars, made the monster, who was not taller than a good bludgeon, look like a little demon.

He began by questioning me very nar-

rowly; made me relate every circumstance of my life—particularly since my return to Ispahan—inquired who were my father's greatest apparent friends and associates, and what my own suspicions led me to conclude. In short, he searched into every particular, with the same scrutiny that a doctor would in tracing and unravelling an intricate disorder.

When he had well pondered over every thing that I had unfolded, he then required to be shown the premises, which my father principally inhabited. My mother having gone that morning to the bath, I was enabled, unknown to her, to take him into her apartments, where he requested me to leave him to himself, in order that he might obtain a knowledge of the localities necessary to the discoveries which he hoped to make. He remained there a full quarter of an hour, and when he came out requested me to collect those who were in my father's intimacy, and in the habit of much frequenting the house, and that he

would return, they being assembled, and begin his operations.

Without saying a word to my mother about the diviner, I requested her to invite her most intimate friends for the following morning, it being my intention to give them a breakfast; and I myself begged the attendance of the âkhon, the capiji, my father's nephew by his first wife, and a brother of my mother, with others who had free entrance into the house.

They came punctually; and when they had partaken of such fare as I could place before them, they were informed of the predicament in which I stood, and that I had requested their attendance to be witnesses to the endeavours of the diviner to discover where my father was wont to keep his money, of the existence of which, somewhere or other, nobody who knew him could doubt. I looked into each man's face as I made this speech, hoping to remark some expression which might throw a light upon my suspicions, but every body

seemed ready to help my investigation, and maintained the most unequivocal innocence of countenance.

At length the dervish, Teez Negah (for that was the name of the conjuror), was introduced, accompanied by an attendant who carried something wrapt up in a handkerchief. Having ordered the women in the anderûn to keep themselves veiled, because they would probably soon be visited by men, I requested the dervish to begin his operations.

He first looked at every one present with great earnestness, but more particularly fixed his basilisk eyes upon the âkhon, who evidently could not stand the scrutiny, but exclaimed '*Allah il Allah!*'—there is but one God—stroked down his face and beard, and blew first over one shoulder and then over the other, by way of keeping off the evil spirit. Some merriment was raised at his expense; but he did not appear to be in a humour to meet any one's jokes.

After this, the dervish called to his at-

tendant, who from the handkerchief drew forth a brass cup, of a plain surface, but written all over with quotations from the Koran, having reference to the crime of stealing, and defrauding the orphan of his lawful property. He was a man of few words, and simply saying, 'In the name of Allah, the All-wise, and All-seeing,' he placed the cup on the floor, treating it with much reverence, both in touch and in manner.

He then said to the lookers-on, '*Inshallah*, it will lead us at once to the spot where the money of the deceased Kerbelai Hassan (may God show him mercy!) is, or was deposited.'

We all looked at each other, some with expressions of incredulity, others with unfeigned belief, when he bent himself towards the cup, and with little shoves and pats of his hand he impelled it forwards, exclaiming all the time, 'See, see, the road it takes. Nothing can stop it. It will go, in spite of me. *Mashallah, Mashallah!*'

We followed him, until he reached the door of the harem, where we knocked for admittance. After some negotiation it was opened, and there we found a crowd of women (many of whom had only loosely thrown on their veils) waiting with much impatience to witness the feats which this wonderful cup was to perform.

'Make way,' said the diviner to the women who stood in his path, as he took his direction towards a corner of the court, upon which the windows of the room opened—'Make way; nothing can stop my guide.'

A woman, whom I recognized to be my mother, stopt his progress several times, until he was obliged to admonish her, with some bitterness, to keep clear of him.

'Do not you see,' said he, 'we are on the Lord's business? Justice will be done, in spite of the wickedness of man.'

At length he reached a distant corner, where it was plain that the earth had been recently disturbed, and there he stopped.

'*Bismillah*, in the name of Allah,' said

he, 'let all present stand around me, and mark what I do.' He dug into the ground with his dagger, clawed the soil away with his hands, and discovered a place in which were the remains of an earthen vessel, and the marks near it of there having been another.

'Here,' said he, 'here the money was, but is no more.' Then taking up his cup, he appeared to caress it, and make much of it, calling it his little uncle and his little soul.

Every one stared. All cried out, '*ajaib*,' wonderful; and the little humpback was looked upon as a supernatural being.

The capiji, who was accustomed to such discoveries, was the only one who had the readiness to say, 'But where is the thief? You have shown us where the game lay, but we want you to catch it for us:—the thief and the money, or the money without the thief—that is what we want.'

'Softly, my friend,' said the dervish to the capiji, 'don't jump so soon from the

crime to the criminal. We have a medicine for every disorder, although it may take some time to work.'

He then cast his eyes upon the company present, twinkling them all the while in quick flashes, and said, 'I am sure every one here will be happy to be clear of suspicion, and will agree to what I shall propose. The operation is simple, and soon over.'

'*Elbetteh*,' certainly; '*Belli*,' yes; '*Een che harf est?*' what word is this? was heard to issue from every mouth, and I requested the dervish to proceed.

He called again to his servant, who produced a small bag, whilst he again took the cup under his charge.

'This bag,' said the diviner, 'contains some old rice. I will put a small handful of it into each person's mouth, which they will forthwith chew. Let those who cannot break it beware, for Eblis is near at hand.'

Upon this, placing us in a row, he filled each person's mouth with rice, and all im-

mediately began to masticate. Being the complainant, of course I was exempt from the ordeal; and my mother, who chose to make common cause with me, also stood out of the ranks. The quick-sighted dervish would not allow of this, but made her undergo the trial with the rest, saying, 'The property we seek is not yours, but your son's. Had he been your husband, it would be another thing.' She agreed to his request, though with bad grace, and then all the jaws were set to wagging, some looking upon it as a good joke, others thinking it a hard trial to the nerves. As fast as each person had ground his mouthful, he called to the dervish, and showed the contents of his mouth.

All had now proved their innocence excepting the âkhon and my mother. The former, whose face exhibited the picture of an affected cheerfulness with great nervous apprehension, kept mumbling his rice, and turning it over between his jaws, until he cried out in a querulous tone, 'Why do

you give me this stuff to chew? I am old, and have no teeth:—it is impossible for me to reduce the grain;' and then he spit it out.—My mother, too, complained of her want of power to break the hard rice, and did the same thing. A silence ensued, which made us all look with more attention than usual upon them, and it was only broken by a time-server of my mother, an old woman, who cried out, 'What child's play is this? Who has ever heard of a son treating his mother with this disrespect, and his old schoolmaster, too? Shame, shame!—let us go—he is probably the thief himself.'

Upon this the Dervish said, 'Are we fools and asses, to be dealt with in this manner? Either there was money in that corner, or there was not—either there are thieves in the world, or there are not. This man and this woman, pointing to the ákhon and my mother, have not done that which all the rest have done. Perhaps, they say the truth, they are old, and cannot break the hard grain. Nobody says that they stole

the money—they themselves know that best,' said he, looking at them through and through; 'but the famous diviner, Hezar-fun, he who was truly called the bosom friend to the Great Bear, and the confident of the planet Saturn,—he who could tell all that a man has ever thought, thinks, or will think,—he hath said that the trial by rice among cowards was the best of all tests of a man's honesty. Now, my friends, from all I have remarked, none of you are slayers of lions, and fear is easily produced among you. However, if you doubt my skill in this instance, I will propose a still easier trial,—one which commits nobody, which works like a charm upon the mind, and makes the thief come forward of his own accord, to ease his conscience and purse of its ill-gotten wealth, at one and the same time. I propose the *Hâk reezî*, or the heaping up earth. Here in this corner I will make a mound, and will pray so fervently this very night, that, by the blessing of Allah, the Hajjî,' pointing to

me, 'will find his money buried in it to-morrow at this hour. Whoever is curious, let them be present, and if something be not discovered, I will give him a miscal of hair from my beard.'

He then set to work, and heaped up earth in a corner, whilst the lookers on loitered about, discussing what they had just seen; some examining me and the dervish as children of the evil spirit, whilst others again began to think as much of my mother and the schoolmaster. The company then dispersed, most of them promising to return the following morning, at the appointed time, to witness the search into the heap of earth.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the diviner's success in making discoveries, and of the resolution which Hajji Baba takes in consequence.

I MUST own that I began now to look upon the restoration of my property as hopeless. The diviner's skill had certainly discovered that money had been buried in my father's house, and he had succeeded in raising ugly suspicions in my mind against two persons whom I felt it to be a sin to suspect; but I doubted whether he could do more.

However, he appeared again on the following morning, accompanied by the capiji, and by several of those who had been present at the former scene. The âkhon, however, did not appear, and my mother was also absent, upon pretext of being obliged to visit a sick friend. We proceeded

in a body to the mound, and the Dervish having made an holy invocation, he approached it with a sort of mysterious respect.

'Now we shall see,' said he, 'whether the Gins and the Peris have been at work this night;' and exclaiming '*Bismillah!*' he dug into the earth with his dagger.

Having thrown off some of the soil, a large stone appeared, and having disengaged that, to the astonishment of all, and to my extreme delight, a canvas bag well filled was discovered.

'Oh my soul! oh my heart!' exclaimed the humpback, as he seized upon the bag, 'you see that the Dervish Teez Negah is not a man to lose a hair of his beard. There, there,' said he, putting it into my hand, 'there is your property: go, and give thanks that you have fallen into my hands, and do not forget my *hak sai*, or my commission.'

Every body crowded round me, whilst I broke open the wax that was affixed to the mouth of the bag, upon which I recognised

the impression of my father's seal; and eagerness was marked on all their faces as I untied the twine with which it was fastened. My countenance dropped woefully when I found that it only contained silver, for I had made up my mind to see gold. Five hundred *reals** was the sum of which I became the possessor; out of which I counted fifty, and presented them to the ingenious discoverer of them. 'There,' said I, 'may your house prosper! If I were rich I would give you more: and although this is evidently but a small part of what my father (God be with him!) must have accumulated, still again I say, may your house prosper, and many sincere thanks to you.'

The Dervish was satisfied with my treatment of him, and took his leave, and I was soon after left by the rest of the company—the capiji alone remaining. 'Famous busi-

* A real is about two shillings—eight reals one tomaun.

ness we have made of it this morning,' said he. 'Did I not say that these diviners performed wonders?'

'Yes,' said I, 'yes, it is wonderful, for I never thought his operations would have come to any thing.'

Impelled by a spirit of cupidity, now that I had seen money glistening before me, I began to complain that I had received so little, and again expressed to Ali Mohamed my wish of bringing the case before the Cadi; 'for,' said I, 'if I am entitled to these five hundred reals, I am entitled to all my father left; and you will acknowledge that this must be but a very small part of his savings.'

'Friend,' said he, 'listen to the words of an old man. Keep what you have got, and be content. In going before the Cadi, the first thing you will have to do will be to give of your certain, to get at that most cursed of all property, the uncertain. Be assured that after having drained you of your four hundred and fifty reals, and having got five hundred from your oppo-

nents, you will have the satisfaction to hear him tell you both to 'go in peace, and do not trouble the city with your disputes.' Have not you lived long enough in the world to have learnt this common saying—'Every one's teeth are blunted by acids, except the Cadi's, which are by sweets?'

'The Cadi who takes five cucumbers as a bribe, will admit any evidence for ten beds of melons.'

After some deliberation, I determined to take the advice of the capiji; for it was plain that if I intended to prosecute any one, it could only be my mother and the âkhon; and to do that, I should raise such a host of enemies, and give rise to such unheard of scandal, that perhaps I should only get stoned by the populace for my pains.

'I will dispose of every thing I have at Ispahan,' said I to my adviser, 'and, having done that, will leave it never to return, unless under better circumstances. It shall never see me more,' exclaimed I, in a vapouring fit, 'unless I come as one having authority.'

Little did I think, when I made this vain speech, how diligently my good stars were at work to realize what it had expressed.

The capiji applauded my intention; the more so, as he took some little interest that my resolutions should be put into practice; for he had a son, a barber, whom he wished to set up in business; and what could be more desirable, in every respect, than to see him installed in the shop in which my poor father had flourished so successfully, close to his post at the caravanserai?

He made proposals, that I should dispose of the shop and all its furniture to him, which I agreed to do, upon the evaluation of some well-known brother of the strap, and thus I was relieved of one of my remaining cares.

As for my father's house and furniture, notwithstanding my feelings at the recent conduct of my mother, I determined, by way of acquiring a good name (of which I was very much in want), to leave her in full possession of them, reserving to myself the

temesoûts, or deeds, which constituted me its lawful owner.

All being settled and agreed upon, I immediately proceeded to work. I received five hundred piastres from the capiji for my shop; for he also had been a great accumulator of his savings, and every body allowed that money was never laid out to better advantage, since the shop was sure to enjoy a great run of business, owing to its excellent situation. I therefore became worth in all about one hundred and ten tomauns in gold, a coin into which I changed my silver, for the greater facility which it gave me of carrying it about my person. Part of this I laid out in clothes, and part in the purchase of a mule, with its necessary furniture. I gave the preference to a mule, because, after mature deliberation, I had determined to abandon the character of a *sahib shemshir*, or a man of the sword, in which, for the most part, I had hitherto appeared in life, and adopt that of a *sahib calem*, or a man of the pen, for which, after

my misfortunes, and the trial which I had in some measure made of it at Kom, I now felt a great predilection.

'It will not suit me, now, to be bestriding a horse,' said I to myself, 'armed, as I used to be, at all points, with sword by my side, pistols in my girdle, and a carbine at my back. I will neither deeply indent my cap, and place it on one side, as before, with my long curls dangling behind my ears, but wind a shawl round it, which will give me a new character; and, moreover, clip the curls, which will inform the world that I have renounced it and its vanities. Instead of pistols, I will stick a roll of papers in my girdle; and, in lieu of a cartouche-box, sling a Koran across my person. Besides, I will neither walk on the tips of my toes, nor twist about my body, nor screw up my waist, nor throw my shoulders forward, nor swing my hands to and fro before me, nor in short take upon myself any of the airs of a *kasheng*, of a beau, in which I

indulged when sub-deputy to the chief executioner. No; I will, for the future, walk with my back bent, my head slouching, my eyes looking on the ground, my hands stuck either in front of my girdle, or hanging perpendicular down my sides, and my feet shall drag one after the other, without the smallest indication of a strut. Looking one's character is all in all; for if, perchance, I happen to say a foolish thing, it will be counted as wisdom, when it comes from a mortified looking face, and a head bound round with a mollah's shawl, particularly when it is accompanied with a deep sigh, and an exclamation of *Allah ho Akbar!* or *Allah, Allah il Allah!* and if, perchance, I am brought face to face with a man of real learning, and am called upon to sustain my character, I have only to look wise, shut my lips, and strictly keep my own counsel. Besides, I can read; and, with the practice that I intend to adopt, it will not be long before I shall be able to write a good hand:

—that alone, by enabling me to make a copy of the Koran, will entitle me to the respect of the world.'

With reflections such as these I passed my time until it was necessary to decide whither I should bend my steps.—Every thing told me that I ought to make the most of the good impression which I had left behind me, on the minds of the mûshtehed of Kom and his disciples, for he was the most likely person to help me in my new career: he might recommend me to some mollah of his acquaintance, who would take me as his scribe or his attendant, and teach me the way that I should go.—Besides, I left him so abruptly when through his means I had been released from my confinement in the sanctuary, that I felt I had a debt of gratitude still to pay. 'I will take him a present,' said I; 'he shall not say that I am unmindful of his goodness.' Accordingly I turned over in my thoughts what I ought to present, when I again determined upon a praying-carpet,

which I forthwith purchased; reflecting, at the same time, that it would make a comfortable seat, when duly folded, on the top of my mule's pad.

I had now nearly finished all that I had to do, previous to my departure. I was equipped ready for my journey, and I flattered myself that my outward appearance was that of a rigid mollah. I did not take upon myself the title of one, but rather left that to circumstances; but, in the mean while, the epithet of Hajjî, which had been given to me as a pet name when I was a child, now came very opportunely to my assistance, to aid me to sustain my new character.

One duty I still had to accomplish, and that was to pay the expenses of my father's funeral. I do own that, cheated as I had been of my lawful patrimony, I felt it hard that such an expense should fall upon me; and several times had planned a departure from Ispahan unknown to any body, in order that the burthen might fall upon the

âkhon and my mother, to whom I had intended the honour of payment; but my better feelings got the mastery, and reflecting that by acting thus I should render myself fully entitled to the odious epithet of *peder sukhtéh** (one whose father is burnt), without further combat, I went round to each of the attendants, namely, mollahs, mourners, and washers of the dead, and paid them their dues.

* *Peder sukhteh* is the most common term of abuse in a Persian's mouth. It implies "one whose father is burning in eternal fires."

CHAPTER V.

Hajji Baba quits his mother, and becomes the scribe to a celebrated man of the law.

I TOOK leave of my mother without much regret, and she did not increase the tenderness of our parting by any great expression of sorrow. She had her plans, I had mine; and, considering how we stood circumstanced, the less we ran in each other's way the better.

I mounted my mule at break of day, and, ere the sun had past its meridian, was already considerably advanced on my road to Kom. I loitered but little on my journey, notwithstanding the pleasures which a halt at Kashan might have afforded me, and on the ninth day I once again saw the gilded cupola of the tomb of Fatimeh.

Alighting at a small caravanserai in the town, I saw my mule well provided, and then, with my present to the mûshtehed

under my arm, I proceeded to his house. His door was open to every one, for he made no parade of servants to keep the stranger in awe, as may be seen at the houses of the great in Persia; and, leaving my carpet at the door with my shoes, I entered the room, in one corner of which I found the good man seated.

He immediately recognised me, and, giving me a welcome reception, he desired me to seat myself, which I did, with all proper respect, at the very edge of the felt carpet.

He asked me to relate the history of my adventures since I left Kom, for he professed himself interested in my fate; and, having made him all the necessary acknowledgments for procuring my release from the sanctuary, I related all that had befallen me. I also told him what a calling I felt within me to devote myself to a holy life, and entreated his help to procure me some situation in which I might show my zeal for the interests of the true faith.

He reflected for a moment, and said, 'that very morning he had received a letter from one of the principal men of the law of Tehran, the Mollah Nadân, who was much in want of one who would act as half scribe and half servant; one, in short, who might be of good materials for a future mollah, and whom he would instruct in all that was necessary in that vocation.'

My heart leaped within me when I heard this, for it was precisely the place that my imagination had created. 'Leave it to me,' thought I, 'to become a whole mollah, when once I have been made half a one.'

Without hesitation I entreated the mûshtehed to continue his good offices in my behalf, which he promised to do; and forthwith addressed a small note, with his own hand, to the Mollah Nadân. This he sealed, and, having duly fashioned it in its proper shape with his scissars, rolled it up and delivered it to me; saying,

'Proceed to Tehran immediately; no doubt you will find the place vacant, and the mollah willing to appoint you to fill it.'

I was so happy that I kissed the good man's hand and the hem of his garment, making him thousands of acknowledgments for his goodness.

'I have one more favour to ask of my master,' said I, 'which is, that he will deign to accept a small *peish-kesh*, a present from his humble slave; it is a praying-carpet, and, should he honour him so far as to use it, he hopes that now and then he will not forget the donor in his prayers.'

'May your house prosper, Hajjî,' said he very graciously, 'and I am thankful to you for remembering me, not that there was the least occasion for this present. Be a good Mussulman, wage war against the infidels, and stone the sûfis,—that is the only return I ask; and be assured that, by so doing, you will always find a place in my memory.'

I then presented my gift, with which he seemed much pleased; and, having received my dismissal, I returned to my caravanserai, in the determination of pursuing my road to the capital as fast as I could. I did not even give myself time to call upon my other friends at Kom, or even to take a look at my former unhappy cell in the sanctuary; but, saddling my mule, I pushed on to the caravanserai of the *Púl-i-dallâk* that very night.

I reached Tehran in the evening, and, in order not to see the spot in which the unfortunate Zeenab was buried, I made a deviation from my straight road, and entered by the Casbin gate. I was happy to remark that I was not recognised by the guards, who, when I was in office, were accustomed to show themselves on the alert at my approach. But indeed it was not surprising that the active, bustling, imperious Nasakchi should not be known under the garb of the would-be humble and

insignificant priest; so for the present I felt secure in my disguise, and I boldly took my way through the bazars and the most public places of the city, where formerly nothing but my face was to be seen; and happy was I to find that no one recollected me. I inquired my way to the house of the mollah Nadân, which was speedily pointed out, for he was a well-known character; but, on second thoughts, I deemed it more prudent and convenient to put up at a small caravanserai, situated near the house of my new master, than to present myself, late in the day as it then was, to him, upon whom it was my interest, by my looks and appearance, to produce the best possible impression.

Having taken good care of my mule, I slept soundly after the fatigues of the journey; and the next morning I repaired to the bath, where, having given a fresh tinge to my beard, and plentifully used the khena to my hands and feet, I flattered myself that in appearance I was precisely

the sort of person likely to meet with success.

The mollah's house was situated between the royal mosque and the quarters of the camel artillerymen, and near to the entrance of the bazar, which, leading by the gate of the said mosque, opens at its other extremity immediately on the ditch of the Shah's palace. It had a mean front; although, having once passed through the gate, the small court-yard which immediately succeeded was clean, and well watered; and the room which looked into it, though only whitewashed, had a set of carpets, which did not indicate wealth, but still spoke the absence of poverty.

In this room was seated a wan and sickly-looking priest, whom I took to be the master of the house; but I was mistaken—he was in his anderûn, and I was told that he would shortly make his appearance.

In order to make known my pretensions to being something more than a servant, I sat down, and entered into conversation

with the priest, who, from what I could pick from him, was a dependent upon the mollah. He, in his turn, endeavoured to discover what my business could be; but he did not so well succeed, although the strange and mysterious questions which he put drew forth my astonishment.

'You are evidently newly arrived in Tehran?' said he.

'Yes, at your service,' said I.

'You intend probably to make some stay?' added he.

'That is not quite certain,' said I.

Then, after a pause, he said, 'It is dull living alone, even for a week, and Tehran is a city full of enjoyment. If there is any service that I can perform, I will do it—upon my eyes, be it.'

'May your kindness never be less! My business is with the mollah Nadân.'

'There is no difference between him and me,' said he. 'I can facilitate any business you may have; and, praise be to Allah,

you will be served to your heart's content. We have at our disposal of all sorts and all prices.'

'I am not a merchant,' said I.

'There is no necessity to be a merchant,' said he; 'it is enough that you are a man and a stranger. You will find, be it for a year, a month, a week, a day, or even an hour, that you will pass your time agreeably; upon my head be it.'

I became more and more puzzled at his meaning, and was on the point of asking him to enlighten my understanding, when the mollah Nadân, in person, entered the room.

He was a tall handsome man, about forty years of age, with a jet-black beard, glossy with fresh dye, and with fine brilliant eyes, painted with the powder of antimony. He wore on his head an immense turban of white muslin, whilst a *hirkeh*, or Arab cloak, with broad stripes of white and brown alternately, was thrown over his shoulders. Although his athletic person

was better suited to the profession of arms than to that of the law, yet his countenance had none of the frankness of the soldier, but on the contrary bespoke cunning and design, while at the same time it announced good humour.

I got up at his approach, and immediately presented my note from the mûshtehed, whilst I did not venture again to sit.—Having unrolled it, he looked at me and then at it, as if to divine what could be my business; but as soon as he had decyphered the seal, his face expanded into a bright smile, and he requested me to be seated.

'You are welcome,' said he; and then he asked me a series of questions concerning the health of the holy man, which I freely answered, as if intimately acquainted with him. He read the note with great attention, but said not a word of its contents. He then began to make apologies for not having a *kalian* (a pipe) to offer me, 'for,' said he, 'I am not a smoker of tobacco. We, who rigidly uphold the true faith, reject all such luxuries, and mortify our

senses. Our Holy Prophet (upon whom be blessings and peace!) has forbidden to his followers whatever intoxicates; and although tobacco be almost universally used throughout Persia as well as Turkey, yet it is known sometimes to obscure the understanding, and therefore I abstain from it.'

He continued to talk about himself, his fasts, his penance, and his self-mortification, until I began to think that I should pass my time but so so in his house, nor enjoy the delights the priest had just before promised me; but when I compared his healthy and rubicund face, his portly and well-fed body, to the regimen which he professed to keep, I consoled myself by the hope that he allowed great latitude in his interpretation of the law; and perhaps that I should find, like the house which he inhabited, which had its public and private apartments, that his own exterior was fitted up for the purposes of the world, whilst his interior was devoted to himself and his enjoyments.

CHAPTER VI.

The mollah Nadân gives an account of his new scheme for raising money, and for making men happy.

When left to ourselves (for the priest soon after quitted the room), mollah Nadán, taking the mûshtehed's note from his breast, said, that he should be happy to receive me in his service upon so good a recommendation; and having questioned me upon my qualifications, I gave such answers, that he expressed himself satisfied.

'I have long been seeking a person of your character,' said he, 'but hitherto without success. He, who has just left us, has assisted me in my several duties; but he is too much of a *napak* (an intriguer) for my purpose. I want one who will look upon my interests as his own, who

will eat his bit of bread with me and be satisfied, without taking a larger share than his due.'

In answer to this, I informed the mollah that although I had already seen much of the world, yet he would find in me a faithful servant, and one ready to imbibe his principles; for (as I had already explained to the mûshtehed) my mind was made up to leading a new life, and endeavouring under his direction to become the mirror of a true Mussulman.

'In that,' said the mollah, 'esteem yourself as the most fortunate of men; for I am looked up to as the pattern of the followers of the blessed Mahomed. In short, I may be called a living Koran. None pray more regularly than I. No one goes to the bath more scrupulously, nor abstains more rigidly from every thing that is counted unclean. You will find neither silk in my dress, nor gold on my fingers. My ablutions are esteemed the most complete of any man's in the capital, and the mode of my

abstention the most in use. I neither smoke nor drink wine before men; neither do I play at chess, at *gengifeh* (cards), or any game which, as the law ordains, abstracts the mind from holy meditation. I am esteemed the model of fasters; and during the Ramazan give no quarter to the many hungry fellows who come to me under various pretexts, to beg a remission of the strictness of the law. 'No,' do I say to them, 'die rather than eat, or drink, or smoke. Do like me, who, rather than abate one tittle of the sacred ordinance, would manage to exist from *Jumah* to *Jumah* (Friday) without polluting my lips with unlawful food.'

Although I did not applaud his tenacity about fasting, yet I did not fail to approve all he said, and threw in my exclamations so well in time, that I perceived he became almost as much pleased with me as he appeared to be with himself.

'From the same devotedness to religion,' continued he, 'I have ever abstained from taking to myself a wife, and in that respect

I may be looked upon as exceeding even the perfection of our Holy Prophet; who (blessings attend his beard!) had wives and women slaves, more even than *Sûleiman, ibn Daoûd* himself. But although I do not myself marry, yet I assist others in doing so; and it is in that particular branch of my duty in which I intend more especially to employ you.'

'By my eyes,' said I, 'you must command me; for hitherto I am ignorant as the Turk in the fields.'

'You must know then,' said he, 'that to the scandal of religion, to the destruction of the law, the commerce of *cowlies*, or courtezans, had acquired such ascendancy in this city, that wives began to be esteemed as useless. Men's houses were ruined, and the ordinances of the Prophet disregarded. The Shah, who is a pious prince, and respects the Ullemah, and who holds the ceremony of marriage sacred, complained to the head of the law, the Mollah Bashi, of this subversion of all morality in

his capital, and, with a reprimand for his remissness, ordered him to provide a remedy for the evil. The Mollah Bashi, (between you and I, be it said), is in every degree an ass,—one who knows as much of religion and its duties, as of Frangistân and its kings. But, I, I, who am the Mollah Nadân,—I suggested a scheme in which the convenience of the public and the ordinances of the law are so well combined, that both may be suited without hinderance to either. You know it is lawful among us to marry for as long or as short a time as may be convenient; and, in that case, the woman is called *mûtí.*' 'Why then?' said I, to the chief priest, 'why not have a sufficient number of such like wives in store, for those who know not where to seek for a companion? The thing is easy to be done, and Nadân the man to do it.'

'The Mollah Bashi, who, though the cream of blockheads in all other cases, is very quick-sighted when his interest is con-

cerned, caught at my idea, for he foresaw a great harvest of gain for himself. —He consequently acquired possession of several small houses of little value, in which he has installed a certain number of women, who, through his interference, are married, in the character and with the privileges of mûties, to whoever is ambitious of such a marriage; and as both parties on such occasion pay him a fee, he has thus very considerably increased his revenues. So eagerly do the people marry, that he has several mollahs at work, wholly engaged in reading the marriage ceremony. He has entirely excluded me from any share in his profits,—I who first suggested the plan; and therefore I am determined to undertake the business myself, and thus add to the public convenience. But we must be secret; for if the Mollah Bashi was to hear of my scheme, he would interpose his authority, overthrow it, and perhaps have me expelled the city.'

During this exposure of the mollah's

plans, I began to look at him from head to foot, and to question within myself whether this in fact could be the celebrated pillar of the law, of whom the mûshtehed, good man! had spoken in such high terms. However, I was too new in holy life to permit any scruples against the fitness of such schemes to come across my mind; so I continued to applaud all that Nadân had said, and he continued as follows:

'I have already three women in readiness, established in a small house in the neighbourhood, and it is my intention to employ you in the search of husbands for them. You will frequent the caravanserais, watching the arrival of merchants and other strangers, to whom you will propose marriage, upon easier terms than the chief priest can offer, and according to the riches of the bridegroom you will exact a proportionate fee. I shall not give you any wages, because you will have opportunities of acquiring such knowledge from me, that in time you may become a mollah yourself,

and show the road to all true believers in the practices of their duty. You will find every thing provided for you in my house; and, now and then, opportunities will offer for putting something honestly into your pocket. Whenever my friends come to see me, and when they take their *shâm* (dinner) with me, you will appear as my servant; on other occasions you may sit before me, and act as my scribe.'

The mollah here finished speaking, in the expectation of hearing what I should say in answer; but I was so bewildered by this vast field of action that he had opened to my view, that it took me some minutes to recollect myself. I, who had expected to lead the life of a recluse, to sit in a corner all the day long, reading my Koran, or mumbling prayers—to frequent lectures in the *medressehs*, (schools) and homilies in the mosques,—I, in short, who in my master expected to have found a despiser of this world's goods, and full of no other care than that of preparing for the next,—

of a sudden was called upon to engage more deeply in the business of life than before, and to follow the footsteps of a man who seemed to exist for no other purpose than to amass wealth, and acquire consideration. 'However, I can but try,' thought I. My circumstances were too desperate to admit of much hesitation; and, after all, to be the pupil of one of the most celebrated men of the capital, was a situation not to be despised; and so I accepted of the mollah's offer.

He then told me that we should soon have some further conversation, which, for the present, he was obliged to defer, because he was called upon to attend the chief of the law; but, before he went, he mentioned, that as he abstained from worldly pomp, he kept no servants but such as were absolutely necessary. His establishment consisted of a cook, and a servant who acted in the triple capacity of head-servant, valet, and groom; and his stud, for the present, was composed of one

ass. 'After considerable trouble,' said he, 'I have managed to procure a white one, which, you know, is an animal that confers consideration on its rider; but, as my business and my dignity increase, I intend to promote myself to a mule.' I did not lose this opportunity of informing him that I had a very good one to dispose of; and, after some negotiation, it was decided that we should keep both mule and ass; he, as the dignitary, riding the former, whilst I should be carried about on the humbler beast.

CHAPTER VII.

Hajji Baba becomes a promoter of matrimony, and of the register he keeps.

Preparatory to the full comprehension of the duties of my office, the mollah Nadân requested me to introduce myself to the mûties, and gain from them sufficient information to enable me to make a register, in which I should insert their ages, appearance and beauty, tempers, and general qualifications as wives. This I should carry about me, in order to be able to exhibit it to any stranger who might fall in my way.

I first went to the bazar, and furnished myself with a priest's cloak, with a coat that buttons across the breast, and a long piece of white muslin, which I twisted round my head. Thus accoutred, in the full dress of my new character, I proceeded to the women's house, and found a ready admis-

sion, for they had been apprised of my intended visit.

I found them all three seated in a mean and wretched apartment, smoking. Their veils were loosely thrown over their heads, which, upon my appearance, by a habit common to all our women, they drew tight over their faces, merely keeping one eye free.

'Peace be unto you, khanums!' said I, (for I knew how an appearance of great respect conciliates,)—I am come, on the part of the mollah Nadân, to make you a tender of my humble services; and perhaps, as you know the object of my visit, you will not object to lay your veils on one side.'

'May you abide in peace,' said they, 'mollah!' and then gave me to understand, by many flattering speeches, that I was welcome, and that they hoped my presence would bring them good luck.

Two of them immediately unveiled, and discovered faces which had long bade adieu to their lilies and roses; and upon which,

notwithstanding the help of the *surmeh* round the eyelids, the blue stars on the forehead and chin, and the rouge on the cheeks, I could, in broad characters, make out a long catalogue of wrinkles. The third lady carefully continued to keep herself veiled.

I did not hesitate to make an exclamation of surprise, as soon as the two charmers had opened their battery of smiles upon me. 'Praises to Allah! *Mashallah!*' said I, 'this is a sight worthy of Ferhad himself. Do not look too intensely upon me, for fear that I consume. What eyes! what noses! what lips! Have pity upon me, and cease looking. But why,' said I, 'does this khanum'—(pointing to the unveiled one)—'why does she hold me so long in suspense? Perhaps she thinks me unworthy of contemplating her charms; and she thinks right, for I am only a poor mollah, whilst doubtless even the sun, in all its majesty, is not entitled to such high privilege.'

'Why do you make this *naz*' (coyness), said her companions to her; 'you know he must be able to give an account of us, or else the curse of single life will be our fate, and we shall remain the scorn and reproach of womankind.'

'Be it so,' said the third woman; 'the cat must come from under the blanket;' and, in a sort of pet, she drew off her veil, and, to my great astonishment, exhibited to my view the well-known features of the wife of the Shah's physician, my former master.

'By all that is most sacred! by the beard of the blessed Prophet!' said I, 'how is this? Are the Gins at work, that they should have brought this about?'

'Yes, Hajjî,' said she, very composedly, 'fate is a wonderful thing. But you, you who killed my husband, how came you to be a mollah?'

'Is your husband dead, then,' said I, 'that you talk to me thus? Why do you throw words away in this unguarded manner? What have I to do with your hus-

band's death? He was once my master, and I grieve for his loss. But you might as well say that I killed the martyr Hossein (blessings on his memory!) as that I killed the hakîm. Tell me what has happened; for I am walking round and round in the labyrinth of ignorance.'

'Why do you pretend ignorance,' said she with her usual scream, 'when you must know that it was on your account that the Shah sent Zeenab out of this world—that her death led to the doctor having his beard plucked—that having his beard plucked brought on his disgrace—and his disgrace death?—therefore you are the cause of all the mischief.'

'What ashes are you heaping upon my head, O khanum?' said I with great vehemence; 'why am I to be told that I am the death of a man, when I was a hundred parasangs off at the time? You might as well say, if your husband had died of a surfeit, that the labourer who had planted the rice was the cause of his death.'

We continued to argue for some time, when the other women, fearing that their interests would be neglected, interposed, and put me in mind that we had business to transact; for they were anxious that their charms should no longer lie barren and neglected. The khanum, too, who only talked for talking sake, and who, to my knowledge, had cherished a more than common hatred for her husband, seemed anxious that I should forget her former more flourishing situation, and requested me to proceed to business.

Still, to carry on the farce of respect, I began first with the doctor's widow, and requested to know some of the particulars of her history; in order, when I came to describe her to some impatient bridegroom, I might be able to do so in the best manner for her interests.

'You know as well as I,' said she, 'that I once enjoyed the favour of that rose in the paradise of sweets, the king of kings; that I was the first beauty in his harem, and

the terror of all my rivals. But who can withstand the decrees of destiny? A new woman arrived, who was provided with a more powerful spell than I could possess for securing the Shah's love, and she destroyed my power. She feared my charms so much, that she would not rest until I was expelled; and then, for my misfortune, the Shah made a present of me to his chief physician. Oh, I shall never forget the pangs of my mind, when I was transferred from the glories and delights of the royal palace to the arms of the doctor, and to a residence among physic and gallipots! I will not repeat all the history of Zeenab. When the hakîm died, I endeavoured to revive the Shah's good feelings towards me; but the avenues to his ear were closed; and from one stage of misery to another, I, who once could lead the vicegerent of Allah by the beard, am reduced to seek a husband in the highway.'

Upon this she began to cry and bemoan her cruel destiny; but I in some measure

pacified her, by the assurance that I would do all in my power to procure for her a suitable mate.

'You see,' said she, 'that I am still handsome, and that the career of my youth is yet to run. Look at my eyes:—have they lost their brightness? Admire my eyebrows. Where will you meet with a pair that are so completely thrown into one? Then see my waist, it is not a span round.'

She went on in full enumeration of her most minute perfections, upon which I gazed with all my eyes, as she desired; but, instead of youth and beauty, I could make nothing better of her than an old fat and bloated hag, upon whom I longed to revenge myself, for her former ill-treatment to the unfortunate Zeenab.

The other two ladies then gave me a sketch of their lives. One was the widow of a silversmith, who had been blown from a mortar for purloining some gold, which he had received to make a pair of candlesticks for the king; and the other had

turned mûti in her own defence, having been abandoned by her husband, who had fled from the wrath of the Shah, and sought refuge among the Russians.

They also endeavoured to persuade me that they were young and handsome, to which I agreed with as good a grace as I was able; and, having made the necessary notes in my register, I promised to exert myself to the best for their advantage. 'Recollect,' said one, 'that I am only eighteen.' 'Don't forget,' said another, 'that I am still a child.' 'Always keep in mind my two eyebrows that look like one,' roared out the hakîm's widow.

'Upon my eyes be it,' exclaimed I, as I left the room; and then I consoled myself for the sight of such a trio of frights, by giving vent to a peal of anathemas and laughter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the man Hajjî Baba meets, thinking him dead; and of the marriage which he brings about.

HAVING accomplished this part of my business, I strolled to one of the most frequented caravanserais in the city, to see whether, perchance, some circumstance might not turn up to advance my master's views. As I approached it, I found all the avenues blocked up with mules and camels heavily laden, intermixed with travellers, some of whom wearing a white band, the distinguishing mark of the pilgrims who have visited the tomb of Iman Reza, at Meshed, informed me that the caravan came from the province of Khorassan. I waited to see it gradually unravel from the maze of the narrow streets, and, after a due allowance of wrangling and abuse between

the mule and camel drivers, I saw it take up its abode in the square of the building.

'Perhaps,' said I, 'my good stars may throw some of my former acquaintance at Meshed into my way;' and I looked at each traveller with great earnestness. It was true that many years had now elapsed since my memorable bastinado, and that time would have made great changes in the appearances of men; but still, I, who knew each face by heart, and had studied its expression as it inhaled my smoke,—hoped that my recollection would not fail me.

I had despaired of making a discovery, and was about to walk away, when a certain nose, a certain round back, and a certain projecting paunch, met my eye, and arrested my attention.

'Those forms are familiar to me,' said I; 'they are connected with some of my early ideas; and assuredly are the property of one who is something more than a common acquaintance. My first master, Osman Aga, came into my mind; but all

idea of him I immediately banished, because it was more than certain that he had long since fallen a victim to the horrors of his captivity among the Turcomâns. Still I looked at him, and at every glance I felt convinced it was either him, his brother, or his ghost. I approached to where he was seated, in the hope of hearing him speak; but he seemed to be torpid (which was another characteristic in favour of my suspicion), and I had waited some time in vain, when, to my surprise, I heard him, in a voice well known to my ears, inquire of a merchant who was passing, 'In God's name, what may be the price of lambs' skins at Constantinople?'

'Oh, for once,' said I, 'I cannot be mistaken! You can be no one but Osman,' —and I immediately made myself known to him.

He was as slow to believe that it was Hajjî Baba who accosted him, as I had been to make him out Osman Aga.

After our expressions of mutual astonish-

ment had somewhat subsided, we began to survey each other. I discussed the grayness of his beard, and he complimented me upon the beauty and blackness of mine. He talked with great serenity of the lapse of time, and of the nothingness of this world, from which I perceived that his belief in predestination had rather increased than diminished by his misfortunes, and which alone could account for the equanimity with which he had borne them. In his usual concise manner, he related what had befallen him since we last met. He said, that after the first feelings of misery at his captivity had gone by, his time passed more agreeably than he had expected; for he had nothing to do but to sit with the camels, whose nature being of the same calm and philosophic cast as his own, suited his quiet and sedentary habits. His food was indifferent, but then he had excellent water; and the only privation which he seemed to regret was tobacco,—a want which long previous habit rendered

infinitely painful. Years had run on in this manner, and he had made up his mind to pass the remainder of his life with the camels, when his destiny took another turn, and he once more had the cheering hope of being restored to liberty. One, who gave himself out for a prophet, appeared among the Turcomâns. According to the custom of such personages, he established his influence by pretending to work two or three miracles, and which were received as such by that credulous people. His word became a law. The most celebrated and experienced marauders freely laid their spoils at his feet, and willingly listed under his banner, in whatever enterprise he chose to propose. Osman Aga presented himself before him, asserted his privileges of a *sûni*, and, moreover, of being an *emir*, and at length succeeded in making the impostor procure his liberty without ransom, which he did, in order to advance the glory of the true faith. Once free, he lost no time in

proceeding to Meshed, where, to his great good fortune, he met merchants from Bagdad, one of whom being nearly connected to him by marriage, advanced him a small sum of money to trade with. He received encouraging accounts of the state of the Turkish markets for the produce of Bokhara, and thither he proceeded to make his purchases on the spot. Owing to his long residence among the Turcomâns, he had acquired much useful knowledge concerning their manners and customs—particularly on the subject of buying and selling—and this enabled him to trade, with much success, between Bokhara and Persia, until he had gained a sufficient sum to enable his return to his country with advantage. He was now on the road to Constantinople, with several mules laden with the merchandise of Bokhara, Samarcand, and the east of Persia; and, having disposed of it there, it was then his intention to return to his native city, Bagdad. He expressed, however, his intention to

remain at Tehran until the spring caravan should assemble, in order to enjoy some of the pleasures of an imperial residence, after having lived so long among savages, as he called the Turcomâns, and he inquired from me how he might most agreeably pass his time.

My fair charges immediately came into my mind; and recollecting of old that he was a great advocate for the marriage state, I proposed a wife to him without loss of time.

Certainly, thought I, nothing was ever more strongly pronounced than the doctrine of predestination has been in this instance. Here, one of my masters arrives from regions beyond the rising of the sun, to espouse the widow of another of my masters, who dies just at the very nick of time to produce the meeting, which I, who come from the countries of the south, step in to promote.

The hakîm's widow was the fattest of the three, and therefore I made no scruple in proposing her to Osman, who at once acceded to my offer. Softening down

the little asperities of her temper, making much of her two eyebrows in one, and giving a general description of her person, suited to the Ottoman taste, I succeeded in giving a very favourable opinion to the bridegroom of his intended.

I then proceeded to inform the mollah Nadân of my success, who appeared to listen with delight to the adventures of this couple, which I related to him with scrupulous detail. He directed me how to proceed, and informed me, in order to make the marriage lawful, that a *vakeel*, or trustee, must appear on the part of the woman, and another on that of the man. That the woman's vakeel having beforehand agreed upon the terms of the marriage, proceeded to ask the following question of the man's vakeel, in the Arabic tongue.

'Have you agreed to give your soul to me upon such and such conditions?' to which the other answers, 'I have agreed;' and then the parties are held to be lawfully

joined together. Nadân himself proposed to officiate on the part of the hakîm's widow, and I on the part of Osman; and it was left to my ingenuity to obtain as large a fee as possible for ourselves, on this happy occasion.

I forthwith communicated the joyful tidings to the khanum, as I still called her, who did not fail to excite the envy of her other companions, for she immediately laid her success to her superior beauty, and to that never-failing object of her care, her two eyebrows in one. She was, as the reader may be allowed to suppose, in great anxiety at her appearance; for she dreaded not being corpulent enough for her Turk, and, from what I could judge, rather doubted the brilliancy of her eye, from the great quantity of black paint which she had daubed on her eyelids.

I left her to return to Osman Aga, who, good man, was also arming himself for conquest; and he seemed to think that, owing

to his long residence among camels, he might have imbibed so much of their natures as to have become a fit subject for the perfumes of musk and ambergris.—Accordingly, he went to the bath, his gray beard was died a glossy black; his hands received a golden tinge; and his mustachios were invited to curl upwards towards the corners of his eyes, instead of downwards into his mouth, as they usually had done.

He then arrayed himself in his best, and followed me to the house of the mollah Nadân, where, owing to this change in his appearance, he very well passed off for a man at least ten years younger than he was in reality.

As soon as the parties came in sight of each other, an unconcerned bystander would have been amused with their first glances--he, the bridegroom, endeavouring to discover what he was about to espouse—she, the bride, making play with her veil in such an artful manner as to induce his belief that it concealed celestial charms.

But I was too deeply interested in the game to make it matter of amusement. Besides, more than once, a certain fifty ducats that had formerly belonged to Osman, and which I had appropriated to my own use, came into my mind, and made me fear that it also might have a place in his: 'and if,' said I, 'he gets displeased and angry, who knows what ashes may not fall upon my head!'

However, they were married; and I believe most truly that he did not succeed in getting one glimpse of his intended until I had pronounced the awful words, 'I agree;' when in his impatience he partly pulled her veil on one side, and I need not say that he was far from fainting with delight.

As soon as he was well satisfied that his charmer was not a Zuleikha, he called me to him, and said, 'Hajjî, I thought that youth, at least, she would have possessed; but she is more wrinkled than any camel. How is this?'

I got out of the scrape as well as I was able, by assuring him that she had once been the flower of the royal harem, and reminded him that nothing had so much to do with marriage as destiny.

'Ah! that destiny,' said he, 'is an answer for every thing; but be its effects what it may, it can no more make an old hag a young woman, than it can make one and one three.'

Sorely did I fear that he would return his bargain upon our hands; but when he found that it was impossible to expect any thing better in a *mutî*, a class of females, who generally were the refuse of womankind,—old widows, and deserted wives; and who, rather than live under the opprobrium that single life entails in our Mohamedan countries, would put up with any thing that came under the denomination of husband, he agreed to take her to his home. I expected, like an hungry hawk, who, the instant he is unhooded, pounces upon his prey, that Osman as soon as he had got

a sight of his charmer, would have carried her off with impatience; but I was disappointed. He walked leisurely on to his room in the caravanserai, and told her that she might follow him whenever it suited her convenience.

CHAPTER IX.

Showing how the ambition of the mollah Nadân involves both him and his disciples in ruin.

Upon a closer acquaintance with my master, the mollah Nadân, I found that, besides his being the most covetous of men, he was also the most ambitious; and that his great and principal object was to become the chief priest of Tehran. To that he turned all his thoughts, and left nothing untried which might bring him into notice, either as a zealous practiser of the ordinances of his religion, or a persecutor of those who might be its enemies. He was the leader in prayer at the principal mosque; he lectured at the royal *medressch*, or college; and, whenever he could, he encouraged litigants to appeal to him for the settlement of their disputes. On every occasion, particularly at the festival of the No Rouz, when

the whole corps of mollahs are drawn up in array before the king, to pray for his prosperity, he always managed to make himself conspicuous by the over-abundance of adulation which he exhibited, and by making his sonorous voice predominate over that of others.

By such means, he had acquired considerable celebrity among the people, although those who knew him better held him in no great estimation. An opportunity soon occurred which abundantly proved this, and which, as I will now narrate, gave an entire new turn to my fortunes.

The winter had passed over our heads, and spring was already far advanced, when reports reached the capital, that in the southern provinces of the kingdom, particularly in Lar and Fars, there had been such a total want of rain, that serious apprehensions of a famine were entertained. As the year rolled on, the same apprehensions prevailed in the more northern provinces; and a drought, such as before was never known, gave rise to the most dismal fore-

bodings. The Shah ordered prayers to be put up at all the mosques in the city for rain, and the Mollah Bashi was very active in enforcing the order.

My master Nadân had here too good an opportunity of manifesting his religious zeal, and of making himself conspicuous by his exertions, not to take advantage of it; and he lost not a moment in giving himself all the stir in his power. Conscious of the influence he had obtained over the populace, he went a step farther than his rival the chief priest, and invited an immense crowd of the lower orders to follow him to a large open space without the city, where he took the lead in prayer.

The drought still continuing, the Shah ordered all ranks of people to attend him, and join in the supplications which he had first commenced. He accounted this so great a triumph, that his zeal now knew no bounds. He caused all sects, Christians, Jews, and Guebres, as well as Musulmans, to put up their prayers: still the heavens

were inexorable; no rain came, the despair increased, and Nadân redoubled his zeal.

At length, one morning when the weather was more than usually sultry, he addressed a mob which he had purposely gathered round his house, in words something to this purpose:

'Is there nothing more to be done, O men of Tehran! to avert this misfortune which awaits the land of Irâk? 'Tis plain that the heavens have declared against us, and that this city contains some, whose vices and crimes must bring the Almighty vengeance upon us. Who can they be but the Kâfirs, the infidels, those transgressors of our law, those wretches who defile the purity of our walls by openly drinking wine, that liquor forbidden by the holy Prophet, (upon whom be blessing and peace!) and by making our streets the scene of their vices? Let us go; follow me to where these odious wine-bibbers live; let us break their jars, and at least destroy one of the causes of the displeasure of Allah against us.'

Upon this a general stir ensued; and fanaticism, such as I never thought could be excited in the breasts of men, broke out in the most angry expressions, which were only the forerunners of the violence that soon after ensued. Nadân, putting himself at the head of the crowd, haranguing as he pressed onwards, and followed by me—who had become as outrageous a fanatic as the rest—led us to the Armenian quarter of the city.

The peaceable Christians, seeing this body of enraged Mohamedans making for their houses, knew not what to do. Some barricadoed their doors, others fled, and others again stood transfixed, like men impaled. But they did not long remain in doubt of our intentions; for first they were assailed with volleys of stones, and then with such shouts of execration and abuse, that they expected nothing less than a general massacre to ensue.

The mollah entered the houses of the principal Armenians, followed by the most violent of the mob, and began an active

search for wine. He made no distinction between the women's apartments and the public ones, but broke open every door; and when at length he had found the jars in which the liquor was contained, I leave the reader to imagine what was the havoc which ensued. They were broken into a thousand pieces; the wine flowed in every direction; and the poor owners could do nothing but look on and wring their hands.

By the time that this ceremony had been performed in every house, the fury of the mob had risen to the utmost, and from the houses they proceeded to the church, which being forced open, they demolished every thing within,—books, crucifixes, ornaments, furniture—nothing was spared; and as there would not be wanting abundance of rogues on such occasions, it was soon discovered that whatever valuables the despoiled had possessed were carried away.

The ruin was now complete; and nothing more was left to the fury of the mob but the unfortunate sufferers themselves, who perhaps would next have been attacked,

had not a king's *ferash* appeared, accompanied by one of the principal Armenians, and their presence produced an almost instantaneous return to reason.

Apprehensive of the consequences of their conduct, all Nadân's followers made a precipitate retreat, leaving that revered personage and myself to face the king's officer. I presume our feelings will not be much envied when we heard him inform us, that the King of Kings demanded our immediate presence. The mollah looked at me, and I at him; and, perhaps, two bearded men never looked more like raw fools than we did at that moment. He endeavoured to temporise, and requested our conductor to accompany him to his house, in order that he might put on his red cloth stockings.

'There will be no occasion for red cloth stockings,' said the ferash, drily.

This produced an universal tremor in the mollah, and I must own that it communicated itself to me in no agreeable manner. 'But what have I done, in the

name of the Prophet?' exclaimed he:—'the enemies of our faith must be overthrown. Is it not so?' said he to the ferash.

'You will see,' returned the impenetrable man of blows.

We at length reached the palace, and at the entrance found the Grand Vizier, seated with the Mollah Bashi, in the chief executioner's apartment.

As we stood at the window, the Grand Vizier said to the mollah Nadân, 'In the name of Ali, what is this that we hear? Have your wits forsaken you? Do you forget that there is a king in Tehran?'

Then the Mollah Bashi exclaimed, 'And who am I, that you should presume to take the lead against the infidels?'

'Conduct them before the king,' exclaimed the executioner, as he arose and took his staff of office in hand. 'Do not keep the Centre of the Universe waiting.'

More dead than alive, we were paraded through the avenues of the palace, and then stepped through the small low door, which

introduced us into the enclosed garden, where we found the king seated in an upper room.

As we approached, I perceived the august monarch twisting his mustachios, which is always esteemed a sign of wrath. I cast a glance at Nadân, and I saw him streaming from every pore. We took our shoes off, as soon as we had come within sight of him, and advanced to the brink of the marble basin of water. The party who stood before the king consisted of the Mollah Bashi, the chief executioner, the Armenian, Nadân, and myself.

The chief executioner then placed his staff of office on the ground, and, making a low prostration, said, with all the prefatory form of words usual in addressing the Shah, 'This is the Mollah Nadân, and this his servant,' pointing to me.

'Say, mollah,' said the king, addressing himself to my master in a very composed tone of voice, 'how long is it since you have undertaken to ruin my subjects? Who gave you the power? Have you become a

prophet? or do you perhaps condescend to make yourself the king? Say, fellow, what dirt is this that you have been eating?'

The culprit, who on every other occasion never wanted words, here lost all power of utterance. He stammered out a few incoherent sentences about infidels, wine, and the want of rain, and then remained immoveable.

'What does he say?' said the king to the Mollah Bashi. 'I have not learnt from whom he claims his authority.'

'May I be your sacrifice,' said the chief priest; 'he says, that he acted for the benefit of your majesty's subjects who wanted rain, which they could not get so long as the infidels drank wine in Tehran.'

'So you destroy part of my subjects to benefit the remainder! By the king's beard,' said the king to Nadân, 'tell me, do I stand for nothing in my own capital? Are a parcel of poor dogs of infidels to be ruined under my nose, without my being asked a question whether it be my will or not that they should be so? Speak, man; what dream

have you been dreaming? Your brain has dried up.' Then raising his voice, he said, 'After all, we are something in our dominions, and the kafirs, though such they be, shall know it. Here, ferashes (calling his officers to him), here, tear this wretch's turban from his head and his cloak from his back; pluck the beard from his chin; tie his hands behind him, place him on an ass with his face to the tail, parade him through the streets, and then thrust him neck and shoulders out of the city, and let his hopeful disciple (pointing to me) accompany him.'

Happy was I not to have been recognised for the lover of the unfortunate Zeenab. My fate was paradise compared to that of my master; for never was order more completely executed than that which had passed the Shah's lips.

Nadân's beard was ripped from his chin with as much ease by the ferashes as if they were plucking a fowl; and then, with abundance of blows to hasten our steps, they

seized upon the first ass which they met, and mounted the priest, the once proud and ambitious priest, upon it, and paced him slowly through the streets. I walked mournfully behind, having had my mollah's shawl torn from my head, and my *hirkeh* (cloak) from my back.

When we had reached one of the gates Nadân was dismounted, and, with scarcely a rag to our backs, we were turned out into the open country; and it is worthy of remark, that no sooner had we left the city than rain began to pour in torrents, as if the heavens had been waiting to witness the disgrace of two of Persia's greatest rogues, and to give the mollah Nadân the lie in favour of the poor, injured, and ruined Armenians.

CHAPTER X.

Hajji Baba meets with an extraordinary adventure in the bath, which miraculously saves him from the horrors of despair.

'So,' said I to my companion, as soon as we were left to ourselves, 'so I am indebted to you for this piece of happiness. If I had thought that this adventure was to have been the result of the mûshtehed's recommendation, you would never have seen Hajjî Baba in this trim. What could it signify to you whether rain fell or no, or whether the Armenians got drunk or remained sober? This is what we have got by your officiousness.'

The mollah was in too pitiable a condition for me to continue upbraiding him any longer. We walked in silence by the side of each other in the saddest manner possible, until we reached the first village on our road. Here we made a halt, in order

to deliberate upon what we should do. My unfortunate companion was expelled the city, therefore it was impossible for him to show himself in it until the storm had blown over; but as we were both very anxious to know what had become of our respective properties—he of his house and effects, I of my clothes, my money, and mule—it was determined that I should return and gain the necessary intelligence.

I entered Tehran in the evening, and, making myself as little recognizable as possible, I slunk through the streets to the mollah's house. At the first glimpse I discovered that we were entirely ruined; for it was in possession of a swarm of harpies who made free property of every thing that fell under their hands. One of the first persons whom I met coming from it was the very ferash who had been sent by the Shah to conduct us to his presence; and he was mounted on my mule, with a bundle in his lap before him, doubtless containing my wardrobe, or that of the mollah.

So borne down was I by this sight, and

so fearful of being discovered, that I hurried away from the spot; and, scarcely knowing whither I was bending my steps, I strolled into a bath, situated not far from the house of our enemy the chief priest.

I went in, undressed myself, and, it being almost dark, I was scarcely perceived by the bathing attendants. Going from the first heated room into the hottest of all, I there took my station in a dark recess, unseen by any one, and gave free course to my thoughts. I considered to what I could now possibly turn my hands for a livelihood: for fortune seemed to have abandoned me for ever, and it appeared that I was marked out for the stricken deer, as the choice game of misfortune.

'I no sooner fall in love,' said I, musing, 'than the king himself becomes my rival, slays my mistress, and degrades me from my employment—I am the lawful heir to a man of undoubted wealth: he lives just long enough to acknowledge me; and although every body tells me that I ought to be rich, yet I have the mortification to

see myself cheated before my face, and I turn out a greater beggar than ever.—The most devout and powerful man of the law in Persia takes a fancy to me, and secures to me what I expect will be a happy retreat for life: my master in an evil hour prays for the blessings of heaven to be poured upon us, instead of which we are visited with its vengeance, driven as exiles from the city, and lose all our property.' Never did man count up such a sum of miseries as I did when seated in the corner of the bath. The world seemed for ever gone from me, and I wished for nothing better than to die in the very spot in which I had nestled myself.

The bath had now been almost entirely abandoned by the bathers, when of a sudden a stir ensued, and I perceived a man walk in, with a certain degree of parade, whom, through the glimmering of light that was still left, I recognized to be the Mollah Bashi in person. Neither he nor his attendants perceived me; and as soon as he was left to himself, (for so he thought) he

immediately got into the reservoir of hot water, or the *hazneh*, (the treasury), as it is called in the baths of Persia.

Here I heard him for some time splashing about and puffing with all his might; a sort of playfulness which struck me as remarkable for so grave and sedate a character; and then a most unusual floundering, attended with a gurgling of the throat, struck my ear; I conceived that he might be practising some extraordinary bodily exercise, and curiosity impelled me to rise gently from my corner, and, with all the precaution possible, to steal softly on the tips of my toes to the aperture of the reservoir, and look in.

To my horror, I perceived the head of the law at his last gasp, apparently without a struggle left in him. It was evident that he had been seized with a fit, and had been drowned before he could call for help.

All the terrible consequences of this unfortunate event stared me full in the face. 'What can now hinder me,' said I, 'from being taken up as his murderer? Every

body knew how ill-disposed against him was my master, the mollah Nadân, and I shall be called the vile instrument of his enmity.'

Whilst making these reflections, standing upon the step that leads into the reservoir, the Mollah Bashi's servant, followed by a bathing attendant, came in, with the warm linen that is used on leaving the bath; and seeing a man apparently coming out of the water, naturally took me for the deceased, and without any words proceeded to rub me down and to put on the bathing linen. This gave me time for thought; and as I foresaw an adventure that might perhaps lead me safely out of the scrape into which my destiny had thrown me, I let it take its course, and at once resolved to personify the chief priest.

A dim lamp, suspended from on high, was the only light that shone in the large vault of the dressing room; and as I happened to be about the size and stature of the deceased, his servants, who were without suspicion, very naturally took me for their master.

I had known and seen a great deal of him during my stay with the mollah Nadân, and therefore was sufficiently acquainted with the manners of the man to be able to copy him for the short time it would take to be attended upon by his servants, until we reached his house. The most difficult part of the imposture would be, when I should enter the women's apartments; for I was quite unacquainted with the locality there, and totally ignorant of the sort of footing he was upon with the inmates of his anderûn. Indeed, I once heard that he was a perfect tyrant over the fairer part of the creation; and as much gossip was carried on at my master's, it came to my recollection, that it had been said he waged a continual war with his lawful wife, for certain causes of jealousy which his conduct was said to promote. He was a man of few words, and when he spoke generally expressed himself in short broken sentences; and as he affected to use words of Arabic origin on all occasions, more

guttural sounds obtruded themselves upon the ear than are generally heard from those who talk pure Persian.

I did not permit myself to open my lips during the whole time that I was dressing. I kept my face in shade as much as possible; and when the water-pipe was offered to me, I smoked it in the manner that I had seen the chief priest do; that is, taking two or three long whiffs, and then disgorging a seemingly interminable stream of smoke.

One of the servants appeared to be struck by something unusual, as I pronounced my *Khoda hafiz!* to the owner of the bath upon leaving it; but all suspicion was at an end when they felt the weight which I gave myself, as they helped me to mount the horse that was in waiting.

I deliberately dismounted at the gate of the house of the deceased; and although I bungled about the passages, yet, following the man who seemed to act as the confidential servant, I came to the little door

which leads into the anderún. I permitted him to do what he no doubt was daily accustomed to do, and just as he had opened the door, and I had advanced two or three paces, he shouted out, '*Cheragh biar*, bring lights,' and then retired.

A clatter of slippers and womens' voices was then immediately heard, and two young slaves came running towards me with tapers in their hands, apparently striving who should first reach me.

The largest apartment of the building was lighted up, and I could perceive in it more women than one. That I took to be the residence of the principal personage, the now widow of the deceased; and I dreaded lest the slaves should conduct me thither. But, aided by my good stars, I must have fallen upon a most propitious moment, when the Mollah Bashi and his wife had quarrelled; an event which seemed to be understood by my conductors, who, seeing me unwilling to proceed to the lighted apartment, drew me on to a door which led

into a small inner court, where I found a *khelwet*, or retiring room, into which they introduced me.

How to get rid of them was my next care; for as they had walked before me, they could not have got a sight of my face, and had they entered the room with me, perhaps they would have made a discovery fatal to my safety. I took the light from the hand of one, and dismissed the other, with a sign of the head. Had I been the same inconsiderate youth as at the time of my acquaintance with Zeenab, perhaps I should have committed some act of imprudence that might have led to my discovery; but now I eyed the two young slaves with apprehension and even with terror; and certainly one of the most agreeable moments of my existence was, when I saw them turn their backs upon me and leave me to my own meditations. The change in my fortune, which had taken place during the last hour, was so unexpected, that I felt like one treading between heaven

and earth; and my first impulse, upon finding myself in safety, after having got over the most difficult part of the imposture, was at one moment to exult and be joyful, and at another to shiver with apprehension lest my good fortune might abandon me.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the consequences of the adventure, which threaten danger, but end in apparent good fortune.

I CAREFULLY fastened the inside of my door as soon as I was left to myself, and put my candle in so remote a corner of the room, that if any one was curious to look through the painted glass window, they could never discover that I was not the Mollah Bashi.

Having done this, it then struck me that something more might be elicited from this adventure than I had at first imagined. 'Let me inspect the good man's pockets,' said I, 'and the roll of paper in his girdle; perhaps they may contain the history of my future plans.' In his right hand pocket were two notes, a rosary, and his seals. In the left his ink-stand, a small looking-glass, and a comb.

His watch was kept in the breast of his coat, and in another small pocket, nearly under his arm-pit, was his purse.

The purse first came under inspection, and there I found five tomauns in gold and two pieces of silver. The watch was gold, and of English manufacture. His inkstand, beautifully painted, was also valuable, and contained a penknife, scissors, and pens. All these and the other trinkets I duly looked upon as my own (for I was determined to play the whole game), and I replaced them in their proper places on my person. The notes then came under inspection. One was to this purpose, without a seal.

'O friend! my intimate! my brother! ('O,' said I, 'this is from an equal!') You know the affection that the friend who addresses you entertains for that bright star of the age, the shadow of our blessed Prophet, and his only wish is, that their intimacy should daily increase and strengthen. He sends him six choice Ispahan melons, such as are not to be

found every day, and requests him, as he values his beard, to give him an unlimited permission to drink wine; for the doctors assure him if he does not take it in abundance, he will not have long to be the scourge and extirpator of the enemies of the true faith.'

'This can only be from the chief executioner,' said I immediately. 'Who else in Persia could express in such few words his own character, namely, flatterer, drunkard, and braggart? I will make something of this; but let me look at the other note. I opened it, and read as follows:

'O my lord and master,

'The humble inferior who presumes to address the prop of the true faith, the terror of infidels, and the refuge of the sinner, begs leave to lay before him, that after having encountered a thousand difficulties, he has at length succeeded in getting from the peasantry of his villages one hundred tomauns in ready money, besides the fifty *kherwars*, or ass loads of grain: that the man, Hossein Ali, could

or would not pay any thing, although he he had bastinadoed him twice, and he had in consequence taken possession of his two cows: that he would go on beating and exerting himself to the best of his abilities; and if some one was sent for the money which he had now in hand, he would deliver it over upon receiving a proper order.'

The note then finished with the usual form of words from an inferior to his master, and was sealed with a small seal, upon which was impressed, Abdul Kerim, the name of the writer.

'Ah,' said I, 'may my lucky stars still protect me, and I will discover who this Abdul Kerim is, and where the village from whence he writes, and then the hundred tomauns become mine.' However I let that matter rest for the moment, to think of the good account to which I might turn the note from the chief executioner. After due reflection, I wrote as follows:

'O my friend! my soul!

'The note of that friend without compare has been received, and its contents understood. When the sacred standard of Islâm runs the risk of losing that lion of lions, that double-bladed sword, that tower of strength, when he may be saved and preserved, who can doubt what is to be done? Drink, O friend, drink wine, and copiously too; and let the enemies of all true believers tremble. May thy house prosper, for the melons; but add one more favour to the many already conferred; lend thy friend a horse, duly caparisoned, for he has pressing business on hand, and he will return it safe and sound, as soon as the star of his destiny shall direct him home again.'

This I impressed with the seal of the deceased, and determined to present it myself very early in the morning.

To the other note I wrote the following answer:

'To the well-beloved Abdul Kerim.

'We have received your note, and have understood its contents. This will be delivered to you by our confidential Hajjî Baba Beg, to whom you will deliver whatever money you have in hand for us. On other subjects, you will hear from us soon; but in the mean while go on with the bastinado, and we pray Allah to take you into his holy keeping.'

Having duly accomplished this, I waited for a proper hour to make my escape from a place where I was in momentary danger of a discovery, which perhaps might bring me to an ignominious end. It was past midnight, and I was preparing to issue in great secrecy from my room, when the door was gently pressed as if some one wanted admittance. My fright may better be imagined than described. I expected to see, at least, the *daroga* (police magistrate) and all his officers rush in and seize me; and I waited in agony for the result of the intrusion, when I heard the sound a fe-

male voice whispering words which my agitation prevented my understanding. Whatever might have been the object of the visit, I had but one answer to give, and that was a loud and heavy snore, which sufficiently proclaimed that the occupant of the apartment was in no humour to be disturbed.

I waited for some time until I thought that every thing was hushed throughout the mansion, then made my way quietly to the principal entrance, which having easily opened, I fled as if pursued. I watched the best opportunities to steal along the streets without meeting the police, and without being discovered by the sentinels on duty. The day at length dawned, and the bazars, little by little, began to open. Dressed as I was in the Mollah Bashi's clothes, my first care was to make such alterations in them that they should not hold me up to suspicion, and this I did for a trifling expense at an old clothes' shop, although, at the same time, I took care not

part with any of the valuable articles which had fallen into my possession.

I then proceeded to the house of the chief executioner, where I presented my note to a servant, an utter stranger to me, saying, that the Mollah Bashi requested an immediate answer, as he was about going from the city on important business.

To my delight, I was informed that the great personage was in his anderûn, and that he must for the present delay sending a written answer; but that in the mean while he had ordered one of his horses to be delivered to me.

O how I eyed the beast as I saw him led out of the stable, with the gold-pommeled and velvet-seated saddle, with the gold chain dangling over his head, and the bridle inlaid with enamelled knobs. I almost dreaded to think that all this was about to become my property, and that such luck could not last long. So strong was this apprehension, that I was about asking for trappings less gaudy and more

serviceable; but again, I thought that any delay might be my ruin; so without mincing the matter, I mounted him, and in a very short time had passed the gates of the city, and was far advanced into the country.

I rode on, without stopping or once looking behind, until I had got among some of the broken ground produced by the large and undefined bed of the river Caraj, and there I made a halt. I recollected to have heard that the village of the Mollah Bashi lay somewhere in the direction of Hamadan, and consequently I directed my course thither. But, to say the truth, when pausing to breathe, I was so alarmed at the extraordinary turn which my fortunes had taken, that, like one dizzy on the brink of a precipice, invaded by a sort of impulse to precipitate himself, it was with some difficulty that I could persuade myself not to return, and deliver up my person to justice. 'I am,' said I, 'nothing more nor less than a thief, and, if caught, should duly be blown from the mouth of a mortar. But

then, on the other hand, who made me so? Surely, if *takdeer* (destiny) will work such wonderful effects, it can be no fault of mine. I sought not the death of the Mollah Bashi; but if he chooses to come and breathe his last in my lap, and if, whether I will or no, I am to be taken for him, then it is plain that fate has made me his *vakeel*, his representative; and whatever I do so long as I remain in that character is lawful —then his clothes are my clothes, his hundred tomauns are my hundred tomauns, and whatever I have written in his name is lawfully written.'

Revived by these conclusions, I again mounted, and proceeded to the nearest village, to inquire where the property of the chief priest was situated, and if a person of the name of Abdul Kerim was known in the neighbourhood. As if the dice were determined to keep turning up in my favour, I found that the very next village, about one parasang distant, was the one in question, and Abdul Kerim a priest of that

name who superintended the interests and collected the revenues of his deceased master. 'Ho,' said I, 'a priest! I must change the tone of the letter, and insert his proper titles.' I immediately sat down on the ground, taking the ink-stand from my pocket, and cutting off a slip of paper from the roll in my girdle, I framed my note anew, and then proceeded on my errand, determined, if I obtained possession of the hundred tomauns, to take the shortest road to the nearest Persian frontier.

CHAPTER XII.

Hajjî Baba does not shine in honesty. The life and adventures of the mollah Nadán.

I PUT on an air of consequence suited to the fine horse which I bestrode as soon as I reached Seidabad (for that was the name of the village), and rode through its gates with such a look of authority, that the peasants who saw me did not fail to make very low inclinations of the head.

'Where is Abdul Kerim?' said I, as I dismounted, and gave my horse to one of the bystanders.

In a moment every one was in motion to find him, and he very soon appeared.

'I am come,' said I, (after the usual salutations) 'on the part of the chief priest, upon certain business well known to you;' and straight I delivered him my note.

Abdul Kerim had a piercing eye, which

did not at all suit me, particularly as he kept conning me over through a corner of it; but I was relieved as soon as he had read the note to hear him say *be cheshm.* 'By my eyes! the money is ready. But you must refresh yourself. In the name of God, come in.'

I pretended great hurry, not at all liking to remain under the fire of his sharp eyes; but by way of not exciting suspicion, I consented to eat some fruit and sour milk.

'I do not remember to have seen you at the chief priest's,' said he to me, as I was opening wide my mouth to swallow a piece of melon; 'and yet I am acquainted with every one of his servants perfectly.'

'No,' said I, half choked at the question, 'no, I do not belong to him. I am an attendant upon the chief executioner, with whom the Mollah Bashi, I believe, has some money transactions.'

This seemed to settle every difficulty which I saw had been rising in the mind

of my entertainer; and thus the fine horse, the gold-pommeled saddle, and the brilliant bridle, were at once accounted for.

Having received the one hundred tomauns, I safely deposited them in my breast; and then, apparently taking the road back to the city, I left the village with a heart much lighter than I had brought. But as soon as I was fairly out of sight, I turned my horse's bridle in the contrary direction, and clapping the stirrups into his flanks, galloped on without stopping, until the foam fairly ran down his sides.

I determined to proceed direct to Kermanshah, there sell horse, saddle, and bridle, and then make my way to Bagdad, where I should be safe from all danger of molestation.

Having proceeded some five parasangs on my road, I saw a strange figure walking before me at a good pace, singing with all his throat. He was lightly dressed, having only a skull-cap on his head, his face bound round with a piece of linen, a pair of slippers on his feet, and nothing to

indicate that he was a way-faring man. As I drew near I thought that I had seen his form before; he was tall and well-shaped, with broad shoulders, and a narrow waist. I should immediately have taken him for the mollah Nadân but for his singing; for it never struck me as possible that one of his grave character and manners could ever lower himself by so ignoble an act. But little by little, I saw so much of him, although he had not yet discovered me, that I could not be mistaken; it was the mollah himself.

I stopped my horse to deliberate whether I should notice, or make myself known to him. To pass him would be the height of cruelty; but to recognize him would of necessity burthen me with an inconvenient companion. But then, should he discern who I was, and find that I had shunned him, he would very probably denounce me as a thief on the very first occasion; and if I escaped him now, I should have the fear ever after of knowing him to be my enemy.

We were both approaching a village where we must pass the night, therefore there was no retreating on my part; for it was necessary to see that proper care was taken of my horse, considering the long journey it had to travel, and to push him on further was impossible.

I took a middle line. Should he recognise me, I would speak to him; if not, I would pass him unheeded. I urged my horse on, and as I approached he turned round and surveyed me from head to foot, but apparently without making me out.

'O Aga, for pity's sake, 'exclaimed he, 'have compassion on an unfortunate man, who has no other refuge in this world than God and you!'

I could not resist such an appeal to my feelings, and, keeping silence for some little while by way of hearing what more he would say, I at length burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. My laughter seemed to be as much out of season as his singing; for he was extremely puzzled

what to make of me: but when I began to speak, all doubts were removed, and he ran up to me with a sort of joy and ecstasy that bordered upon madness.

'Ay, Hajjî, my soul, my uncle, light of my eyes!' said he, as he kissed my knee. 'From what heaven have you dropped? What means this finery, this horse, this gold, these trappings? Do you deal with the *Gins* and the *Dives*, or has fortune fallen in love, and adopted you its heir?'

I continued laughing, so amused was I at these sallies, and he went on, saying: 'How comes it that you have so soon turned your mule into this fine horse? And my property, what is become of it? Have you not even saved my ass, for I am sorely tired of going on foot? Tell me, tell me all: by the beard of the Prophet, tell me all.'

I soon found that had I refused to give him a full account of my adventures, he would suspect me of having got possession of his property, and turned it

into the finery which had just drawn forth his admiration; so I promised faithfully to relate every thing, but I entreated him at the same time to prepare a large quantity of credûlity, for what I had to say was so marvellous, that he would very probably conceive it was my intention to impose upon him.

We then proceeded to the village, where we took up our quarters at the *mehman khaneh*, or strangers' house, a convenience generally to be found in every hamlet throughout Persia, and there established ourselves for the night.

A person of my appearance could not long remain unnoticed, and I was duly waited upon by the *ked khoda*, who supplied us with a good supper; and during the time required for its preparation, I related my adventures to my companion.

Their singularity was in no manner thrown away upon him; and he seemed to die away with delight, when he found that all my present prosperity was at the

cost of his old enemy the Mollah Bashi. As we sat communicating to each other in the full confidence of our hearts (for the miserable are ever greatly relieved by talking of themselves), I discovered that never before had I acquired an insight into the real character of my associate.

'There must have been an assumed importance in you,' said I to him, 'as long as I was in your service; for how could one really proud be so amiable as you appear now?'

'Ah, Hajjî!' said he, 'adversity is a great alterative. My life has been one eternal up and down. I have often compared it to those whirligigs set up by louts in our market-places on the No Rouz, which keep one dangling between heaven and earth. Unfortunately, I am one of those who has never adopted the maxim of, 'spread not your carpet in a wet place.''

'Tell me,' said I, 'the history of your

adventures. We cannot better pass our time, and I hope that you know me well enough now not to refuse me your confidence.'

'You will hear nothing in my history but what is common to many Persians, who one day are princes and the next beggars; but since you are curious to know, I will relate it with pleasure;' and he began in the following words:

'I am a native of Hamadan. My father was a mollah of such eminence, that he was ambitious of becoming the mûshtehed of Persia; but his controversies upon particular points of faith unfortunately carried him so far, that a party was created against him, which deprived him of the elevation he sought. His most prominent quality was the hatred he bore to the Osmanlies, and to Sûnis in general. One of our ancestors is said to have first introduced into Persia a more universal hatred against them than ever before existed, by a simple innovation in the education of the Shiah

children, by which means their very first ideas were trained to be inimical to the race of Omar. 'I mean,' said the mollah, 'that which you no doubt very well remember: when a little boy in school-time is pressed upon certain occasions to ask his master's leave to retire, the form of words in which he is enjoined to make his request is, '*Lahnet beh Omar*,' curse be upon Omar. I dare say you have through life, as I have, never omitted to unite the name of Omar with every thing that is unclean, and at least once a day to repeat the curse which you were taught at school.'

I fully assented to this, and then he proceeded with his story.

'My father's hatred for the sectaries of Omar extended itself to all sorts of infidels. Jews, Christians, Fire-worshippers, and worshippers of images, all came within the scope of his execration; and what at first he had practised from motives of ambition, at length became the ruling prin-

ciple of his nature. His family, and I among the number, were brought up in his tenets, and imbibed all his violent prejudices; and so much did we hang together by them, that we formed as it were a distinct sect,—the terror of infidels, and the most zealous upholders of the Shiah faith.

'After this you will not be surprised at the part I lately took in the destruction of the Armenian wine-jars at Tehran. But that is not the only scrape my zeal has led me into. Very early in life, when still a student at Hamadan, I was involved in a terrible disturbance, of which I was the principal promoter.

'An ambassador from the Pasha of Bagdad, with his suite, was quietly taking his road through our city, having sojourned there two or three days on his way to the court of the Shah, when burning to put into practice my father's lessons, I collected a band of young fanatics like myself, and, making them an appropriate

address, I so excited their passions, that we resolved to perform some feat worthy of our principles. We determined to attack our Turkish guests, inform them of the curses we denounced against Omar, and invite them to become adherents to the doctrine of Ali. Heedless, and, perhaps, ignorant of what is due to the character of *Elchi*, or ambassador, we only saw in Suleiman Effendi an enemy to the Shiahs, and one calling himself a Sûni. One day, as he was setting forth from his house to visit the governor of Hamadan, we gathered ourselves into a body, and greeted him by loud cries of 'Curses be upon Omar!' This enraged his domestics, who retorted the insult by blows. Showers of stones ensued from our party, and this led to a general fray, in which the Pasha's representative had his turban knocked from his head, his beard spit upon, and his clothes nearly torn from his back.

'Such an outrage of course could not be overlooked. The ambassador was fu-

rious; he threatened to send off couriers to the Shah, and was even on the point of returning to his own master, when the governor, frightened at the consequences if his wrath was not appeased, promised that he should have all satisfaction, and that the ringleaders of the disturbance should immediately be delivered up to him.

'Trusting to my father's consequence in the city, and full of vapouring pride at what we had achieved, I at first made light of the vows of vengeance which the Turks breathed against us; but the governor, who only contemplated the loss of his place if the news of this event reached Tehran; and caring little whether Ali was the true successor to the Prophet, or whether Osman, Omar, and Abubekr, were usurpers or not, he at once ordered me to be seized, as well as two others of my companions, and forthwith we were placed at the disposal of the enraged Osmanlies.

I shall never forget the contending emotions of my mind, when brought face to face

before these objects of my hatred. I did not at all relish the sound beating which they had it in contemplation to inflict upon me; and, at the same time, I groaned under the necessity of keeping to myself that stream of abuse which was ready to flow against them upon the smallest provocation.

'They seemed, however, quite ready to return all our hatred with interest, and did not lose this opportunity of letting us know its full extent. They were not generous enough to let us off, but ordered the administration of the bastinado with a degree of religious zest that I thought could never have existed in any breast except my own. To be short, our feet were beat into a jelly, and our only consolation during the operation was the opportunity afforded us of giving vent to our pent up rage. The Turk, however, was revenged, and we were set free.

'This adventure cooled my zeal for many years; although, in the pursuit of the distinctions which my father sought, I

continued to addict myself to controversy. When about twenty-five years old, and my beard had acquired a respectable consistency, I went to Ispahan, in order to improve myself by associating with our celebrated doctors, and to make my own abilities known by the part which I might take in their disputations. I succeeded to the utmost of my wishes, and acquired considerable reputation. I only wanted an opportunity of distinguishing myself, and that was soon afforded me by the following circumstance.

'In the time of our famous Shah Seffi, who was himself half a heretic, the Franks (a sect of the Christians) had considerable establishments at Ispahan for the purposes of commerce, and were much patronised and encouraged by him. He allowed them free exercise of their religion,—permitted them to build churches,—to import priests,—and, to the scandal of the true faith, even allowed them the use of bells to call them to prayer. These Franks have a

supreme head of their church,—a sort of caliph, whom they call *Papa*,—part of whose duty, like that of our own blessed Prophet, is to propagate his religion throughout the world. Under different pretexts, convents of his dervishes were established, some in Ispahan itself, and some in Julfa among the Armenians. Most of these have been abandoned, and the buildings fallen into decay; but one whose object more particularly was the propagation of the christian faith still existed, and to its destruction my endeavours and those of some of our most zealous mollahs were directed, notwithstanding the opposite views of the government, who are anxious to encourage the Christians to settle in Persia, owing to the riches which they introduce by their trade.

'This convent was served by two dervishes, one of whom was in himself a calamity!—one who understood the world,—a man of deep design,—and of a wit so sharp, that the *shaitan* in person was not

fit to be his father. He was tall, thin, and strong. His eyes were like live charcoal, and his voice like a high wind. He never lost an opportunity of entering into argument with our most learned men upon points of religion, and would boldly assert, with the heart of a lion, that our holy Prophet, 'the chief of created beings, the sealed intercessor, Mohammed Mustapha,' (upon whom be eternal blessings!) was a cheat and an impostor. In short, he embarked in the sea of controversy, as if he had Noah for a pilot; and, not content with words, he even wrote a book, in which he pretended to prove the truth of his mad assertions. This book was unfortunately attempted to be answered by one of our divines, who did not recollect that it is folly to play with fire, unless there be plenty of water at hand to extinguish it. His book said any thing but what it ought, and tended more to throw ridicule upon Islamism than to uphold its glory and perfection. Ispahan was full of this subject

when I arrived there; and, being anxious to bring myself forwards, I proposed that an invitation should be made to the Frank dervish to meet the mollahs of the city in person, on an appointed day, in the Medresseh Jedeed, when they would argue every point of their respective faiths, and when they would either make the dervish turn Mohamedan, by producing conviction in his mind, or they would become Christians, if his arguments prevailed. To this he immediately assented; but we determined beforehand, amongst ourselves, that such a thorn in the side of our *Ullemah* should no longer exist in Persia, and that the overwhelming truth of our belief should not be left to the chances of vain words and uplifted voices, but show itself in the zeal and numbers of its adherents. Accordingly every turbaned head, and every beard that wagged, were secretly invited to appear on the appointed day; and never was attendance more complete,—never did the children of Islam make such a show of

their irresistible force, as they did on that memorable occasion.

'The Medresseh was already filled; for, besides the mollahs, a great crowd, all anxious to witness the triumph of the true faith, had taken possession of the courts. Head over head and turban over turban were piled upon each other, in thick array, along the walls and in the utmost corners of the hall, when the Frank dervish, alone, unsupported, and unfriended, appeared before us. He looked around in dismay, and appeared appalled by our numbers. Two or three of the principal mollahs, who were to carry on the controversy, were seated in front of their body, and I was close at hand. We had prepared questions, which were to be proposed to him, and according to the answers he gave, so were we to act. He appeared to be provided with no other weapon of defence save his tongue; and he sat down opposite to us, evidently much alarmed at the hostility

which he remarked on the countenances of all present.

'Without giving him any time for reflection, we immediately began:

''Do you believe,' said one, 'that the God in Heaven put himself into a human form?' 'Do you,' said another, 'acknowledge that God is composed of three persons, and still is only one?' 'Are you convinced,' said a third, 'that what you call the Holy Ghost came down from heaven in the body of a dove?'

'These questions were put so quickly, that he knew not which way to turn, until, collecting within himself all the powers of his voice, he exclaimed, 'If your intention is to kill me, be it so; but what good will that do your argument? If your intention be to argue, attacking me in this manner by numbers and personal violence will prove that you can only oppose passion to argument; and show the world, that by me you have been overcome.'

'Seeing that we were likely to fare ill, and observing that his words were producing an effect in his favour, I was the first to exclaim to the surrounding mob, and to the assembly present: 'O Musulmans! Musulmans! come to our help,—our religion is attacked,—the infidel is trying to subvert our faith,—vengeance! help!'

'These words produced an immediate effect, and a thousand voices were lifted up against him. 'Seize him!' said some; 'kill him!' said others. The mob was agitated to and fro, like the waves of the sea; when the dervish, seeing himself in danger, made an attempt to escape, which was seconded by one of the mollahs, whose compassion was moved towards him. He threw his own cloak over the infidel's shoulders, and just as violent hands were about to be lain uopn him, he pushed vigorously through the crowd, and succeeded in reaching the house of an Arme nian in safety.

'We, the mollahs, being disappointed of our prey, proceeded in a body to the house of the governor of the city, followed by an immense crowd of the people. A great fermentation had been excited, and we promoted it all in our power.

'The governor himself was a strict and pious Musulman, and we expected that he would without hesitation join in the cry we had raised. We accused the Frank dervish of preaching false doctrine, with a view to subvert our religion.

'‘This fellow,’ said we, ‘calls our Prophet cheat, and talks abomination. We demand that he be delivered over to us.’

'The governor was perplexed how to act; for he knew how dangerous it was to interfere in matters in which the subjects of Europe were concerned; and he was far from seconding our disposition to violence.

'‘Why invite the dervish to an argument,’ said he, ‘if you will not hear what he has to say? If you have no arguments

to oppose to his, violence only makes your cause worse, and you do more harm than good to our religion. But if on the other hand your arguments are better than his, and he can bring no answer to them, then indeed he is a kafir, an infidel; and according to our law is worthy of death.'

'Finding ourselves balked again, we departed breathing vengeance; and I verily believe, had we met the dervish at that moment, he would have been torn into a thousand pieces. He was so well aware of this, that we soon after heard that he had left the city in secret; and so far our endeavours were successful, for it was long before he ventured again to show himself.

'I had put myself so much forward on this occasion, and had shown my zeal in so many different ways, that I had become a prominent character. But hitherto I had got nothing by it. The capital I felt, after all, was the place where I ought to endeavour to gain some permanent and lucrative situation; and to that I turned my views.

To gain this end, I took myself to Kom, with a view of ingratiating myself with the mûshtehed, whose recommendation I knew would do me more good than ten years of prayer and fasting. I succeeded perfectly; for with the character I had acquired of being the scourge of infidels, I was received by him with great favour, and he was delighted to acknowledge me for one of his most diligent disciples. I soon took up his cause against the Sûfies with all the ardour that he could wish; and it was not long before I ventured to solicit his recommendation to the body of the Ullemah at Tehran, and to the principal men in office at court. He professed to be sorry to part with me, but acceded to my request; and I was soon after counted one of the holy fraternity at the seat of empire.

'I confess to you, although I enjoy as good an opinion of myself as most men, that I was much less successful in making my way at court than I had expected. My

competitors for advancement were numerous, and more versed in the ways of the world than I. Like them, I was obliged to begin by paying a most assiduous attention to men in office. Having once gained the privilege of being seated in the *mejlis* (assembly) of the head of the law, who was in fact my chief, I little by little became noticed by the grand vizier, the lord high treasurer, the secretary of state, the chief executioner, and others. I was constantly to be seen at their uprisings, and at their evening meetings; but after all, I was nothing but a poor mollah, and I longed for some opportunity of distinguishing myself from the common herd. The prime vizier first noticed me, owing to my once having succeeded in making him shed tears, at the commemoration of the death of the blessed Hossein, which he held at his house, and where I preached and chanted the service in a manner that drew forth his approbation, and that of all the assembly. Since then I have made great progress,

particularly in the eyes of the people, whose good opinion I look upon as the first of acquisitions to an ambitious man.

'But you have had an opportunity of judging how little their assistance is to be depended upon, when opposed to the will of an absolute king. Trusting too much to my influence over them, I have lost myself; and I am now what you see, a miserable wanderer, returning to my native city, as pennyless as when I first left it.'

CHAPTER XIII.

Hajjî and the mollah make plans suited to their critical situation, showing that no confidence can exist between rogues.

The mollah Nadân having finished his narrative, I endeavoured to persuade him that the same destiny which had presided over his success in life, and afterwards over his misfortunes, would no doubt serve him again, and restore him to his lost situation: 'for,' said I, 'we both of us have seen enough of life in Persia to have ascertained its extreme instability. When events depend upon the will of one man, he may with as much consistency order you back from exile, as he did the plucking your beard and the thrusting you forth from the city. There is a reaction in misfortune which frequently produces in-

creased prosperity. Thus when the smith sprinkles water upon his burning charcoal, it is extinguished for a moment, and smoke takes the place of flame; but again, at the slightest blast of his bellows, the fire breaks out with redoubled brilliancy.'

'That is precisely the thought with which I was consoling myself,' said my companion, 'and which set me singing, when you overtook me on the road. The Shah most probably thought it necessary to make an exhibition of justice, by way of ingratiating himself with the Christian merchants; but the day will come when he will feel the necessity of making friends of the upholders of the Mohamedan religion, and then the good opinion of such a man as I, who am beloved by the people, will be of consequence to him. I had some thoughts, I confess, of relinquishing priestcraft, and becoming a merchant; but, all things considered, I shall continue to follow my original destiny. I have now an opportunity of setting up for a martyr,

and *that*, now I recollect it, is worth more than the loss of my worldly goods, my house, my furniture, my white ass, and even my muties.'

'Then what do you propose doing?' said I. 'Will you accompany me to Bagdad, or will you wait the tide of events in Persia?'

'My plan,' said he, 'is to proceed to my native place, Hamadan, where my father, who is still alive, enjoys considerable reputation: through his means I will set negotiations on foot for my readmission to the capital, and ultimately for my restoration to the situations of which I have been deprived. But you,—what road do you intend to pursue? When *inshallah*, please God, I am restored, I shall require your talents to make my mutî establishment prosper. You had better remain at Hamadan with me, and follow my fortunes.'

'Ah, my friend,' said I, 'with all my present apparent prosperity, I am more of an exile than you. Events have played wickedly into my lap, and here am I, (God

knows how unwillingly) an avowed thief. I could not do otherwise than follow my destiny, which has clothed me with the garments of the chief priest, enriched me with his money, and mounted me upon the finely caparisoned steed of the executioner in chief. That same destiny compels me to fly my country: I cannot remain in it to run the chance of being discovered and cut into quarters, to grace the gates of the city. No, before many days are expired, I hope to have reached the Turkish frontier, and then only shall I call myself in safety.'

Upon this I made him an offer of part of my acquired spoils, by which I hoped to secure his secresy, and happy was I to find him nothing loth. He accepted of ten tomauns (leaving me ninety-five in hand), which he said would be enough for present purposes, and which he promised to repay whenever his fortunes should be re-established. But upon taking them from me, he again urged me to proceed with him to Hamadan. He represented in the strongest colours the danger I ran

of being seized before I could escape from the Shah's territories, and even when I should have quitted them; 'For,' said he, 'the moment the death of the Mollah Bashi is known, and as soon as the chief executioner shall have discovered the loss of his horse, he will not fail to despatch officers throughout the country in search of you, and you are too conspicuous a character now not to be easily traced. It will be much better for you to take refuge with me, who will not fail to avert any inquiries, until the event has blown over, when you will be at liberty to follow your plans in safety. My father owns a village at some distance from Hamadan, where you can live unsuspected; and as for your horse and trappings, we may dispose of them in such a manner that they cannot lead to your discovery. Hamadan is not very far distant. If you depart hence at midnight, we shall reach it early to-morrow; and this we can easily do by making your horse carry us both. Consider that the journey is long

to the Turkish frontier; and should the beast fail you, what is to hinder your being taken?'

His words gave a new turn to my thoughts, and I saw that he spoke the language of reason. Totally ignorant of this part of Persia, and feeling how necessary it was for my safety not only to be acquainted with the high roads, but also with the unfrequented paths, I looked upon a rapid flight to the frontier as an undertaking not so easily performed as imagined. If the mollah was inclined to betray me, he would as easily do so whether I fled or whether I adopted his plan; and of the two, it appeared to me a safer line of conduct to confide in than to distrust him: and accordingly I agreed to accompaany him.

Refreshed both by food and rest, we departed at midnight, and made great progress on the road to Hamadan ere the sun rose. Having reached a rising ground which gave us a view of the city, we made

a halt, in order to decide upon our present operations. Nadân pointed with his hand to a village about a parasang distant, and said, 'That is the village in which you must take up your quarters, until the story of the Mollah Bashi's extraordinary death be blown over; but you cannot present yourself in this magnificent garb, and mounted on this fine horse, without creating suspicion. I propose that we exchange dresses, and that you surrender the horse up to me. By this means you will appear in the character of a dependent of my father at his village, and I shall keep up the respectability of mine, by returning to the paternal roof properly equipped. This arrangement will advance our mutual as well as our combined interests. You will be safe from suspicion, and I shall not look the pauper that I do now. The history of my disgrace will no doubt soon reach the ears of my family, and perhaps lower them in the eyes of the world; but

in this country, where so much depends upon the effect of outward show, as soon as it is known that I returned to them mounted on a horse with an enamelled bridle, a gold-pommeled saddle, and with a Cashmerian shawl round my waist, they as well as I will be restored to our proper places again. After I have enjoyed the advantage of these things for a few days, it will be very easy to sell them under some plausible pretext, and then you shall duly receive their amount.'

I was rather startled by this proposal, for certainly my companion had not inspired me with sufficient confidence to encourage me trusting him with so much property without any other security than his word. But I felt the truth of all he said. It was impossible for me to keep my incognito at the village for ten days or a fortnight dressed as I was, and the possessor of a fine horse, without creating suspicion. I was now, 'tis true, completely

in the power of the mollah; but by his proposed arrangement he would have become such an accomplice in my guilt, that he could never denounce me without at the same time involving himself.

'But,' said I, 'suppose a Nasakchi discovers the horse, what becomes of us then? You will be seized as well as I.'

'God is great,' answered the mollah; 'no one can have travelled as fast as we, and before any officer can arrive at Hamadan I shall have reached my father's house, and produced all the sensation I require in the city. It will be easy after that to secrete both the horse and his trappings. I take all the risk upon myself.'

Nothing more after this was to be said on my part. We immediately stripped, and made an exchange of clothes. He got from me the deceased Mollah Bashi's under garment, his caba, or coat, his Cashmerian girdle, and his outward cloak, made of a dark green broad cloth; and I, in return, received

his old clothes, which had been torn on his person the day he had been thrust out of Tehran. I gave him my black cap, round which he wound the chief priest's head-shawl, which I had still preserved; and, in return, he delivered over to me his skull-cap. I preserved the Mollah Bashi's purse, the remaining money, the watch and seals; whilst I permitted him the use of the ink-stand, the rosary, the pocket looking-glass, and the comb. He then stuck the roll of paper in his girdle; and when completely made up and mounted, he looked so much like the deceased chief priest himself, that I quite started at the resemblance.

We parted with great apparent affection: he promised that I should hear from him immediately, and in the meanwhile gave me every necessary information concerning his father's village, leaving it to my own ingenuity to make out as plausible a story for myself as I might be able.

He then rode away, leaving me with no

very agreeable feelings, on finding myself alone in the world, uncertain of the future, and suspicious of my present fate.

I made the best of my road to the village; but was extremely puzzled in what character to introduce myself to the inhabitants. In fact, I looked like one dropped from the skies; for what could be possibly said for a man of good appearance, without a shawl to his waist, or an outer coat to his back, with a pair of slippers to his feet, and a skull-cap on his head? After much hesitation, I determined to call myself a merchant, who had been robbed and plundered by the Cûrds, and then sham a sickness, which might be a pretext for remaining in the village until I could hear from the mollah, who would no doubt furnish me with intelligence which might enable me to determine how long I ought to remain in my hiding-place.

In this I succeeded perfectly. The good people of the village, whom Heaven for my good luck had endowed with a considerable

share of dulness, believed my story, and took me in. The only inconvenience which I had to endure was the necessity of swallowing the prescriptions of an old woman, the doctor of the community, who was called to show her skill upon me.

CHAPTER XIV.

The punishment due to Hajjî Baba falls upon Nadân, which makes the former a stanch predestinarian.

I HAD passed ten long and tedious days in my hiding-place, without the smallest tidings from the mollah Nadân. I was suspicious that his star was still glancing obliquely at him, and that matters had not gone quite so well as he had expected. Little communication existed between the city and the village; and I began to despair of ever again hearing of my horse, my rich trappings and clothes, when, one evening, a peasant, who had gone to the market-place of Hamadan for the purpose of hiring himself as a labourer in the fields, and who had returned disappointed, by his discourse threw some light upon my apprehension.

He said, that a great stir had been excited by the arrival of a Nasakchi, who had seized the son of their Aga (the owner of the village), taken away his horse, and carried him off prisoner to the capital, under the accusation of being the murderer of the Mollah Bashi of Tehran.

I leave the gentle reader to judge of my feelings upon hearing this intelligence. I soon became satisfied of the reason of the mollah's silence; and although I felt myself secure for the present, yet I was far from certain how long I might remain so. I immediately declared that I was perfectly restored to health, and taking a hasty leave of my hospitable villagers, made the best of my way to Hamadan, in order to ascertain the truth of the peasant's intelligence.

Nadân's father was well known in the city, and I found no difficulty in discovering where he lived. I abstained from entering his house, and making any direct inquiries concerning the fate of my friend; but I stopped at the shop of a barber in

the neighbourhood, both because I wanted his assistance in giving a decent appearance to my head and face, and because I knew that he would be the most likely person to inform me of the real state of the case.

I found him as talkative and as officious as I could wish. When I had asked him the news of the day, and had pleaded my ignorance of the recent occurrence that had filled every body with astonishment, he stepped back two paces, and exclaimed, 'Whence do you come, that the iniquities of that dog the mollah Nadân are unknown to you? He was not satisfied with killing the chief priest, but he must needs dress himself in his very clothes; and, not content with that, he also has stolen one of the chief executioner's best horses and furniture. Wondrous dirt has he been eating!'

I entreated my informant to relate all the particulars of a story of which I pre-

tended to be totally ignorant; and without waiting for a second request, he spoke as follows:

'About ten days ago this Nadân arrived at the gate of his father's house, mounted on a superb horse, caparisoned in a style more fitting a khan and a man of the sword than a poor servant of God. He was dressed in shawls of the finest quality, and looked indeed like the high priest himself. His appearance in this fashion of dress and equipage created an extraordinary sensation; because a very short time before it was reported that he had incurred the Shah's displeasure, and had been turned out of Tehran in the most ignominious manner. He gave himself all sorts of airs upon alighting; and when questioned concerning his expulsion from the capital, he appeared to make very light of it, and said that he had been made to understand, in a secret manner, that his disgrace was only temporary; and that,

by way of softening it, he had been presented with the horse which he then rode.

'This tale was believed by every one, and he was received at his father's house with great honours; but most unfortunately, the next day, when about mounting his horse to show himself in the city, a Nasakchi passed the gate of the house, having just arrived from Tehran. He stopped, and looked at the animal very earnestly; inspected the bridle, and gold-pommeled saddle, and then cried out, *La Allah il Allah!* there is but one God! He inquired of the bystanders to whom the horse belonged, and was informed that it was the property of the mollah Nadân.

"'The mollah Nadân!' exclaimed he in a great rage: 'whose dog is he? That horse is the property of my master, the chief executioner; and whoever says it is not is a liar, whoever he may be, mollah or no mollah!'

'At this interval appeared the delinquent

himself, who, upon seeing what was going on, endeavoured to hide himself from the observation of the Nasakchi; for it so happened that he was one of the officers who had paraded him through the capital on the day of his disgrace.

'Wearing the garments and turbaned cap of the deceased chief priest, the dangers of his situation immediately stared him in the face, and he would have decamped on the spot, had he not been recognised by the Nasakchi, who as soon as he saw him cried out, 'Seize him, take his soul, that is he—the very man. Well done, my happy stars! By the head of Ali, by the beard of the prophet, that is the bankrupt rogue who killed the chief priest and stole my master's horse.'

'By this time the Nasakchi had dismounted, and, with the assistance of his own attendant, and of the bystanders (who soon discovered that he was acting under authority), he secured the mollah, who, in his defence, made oath upon oath that he

was neither thief nor murderer, and that he was ready to swear his innocence upon the Koran.'

The barber related very faithfully the whole conversation which took place between Nadân and the Nasakchi, the result of which was that the latter took the former with him to Tehran, notwithstanding all the interest made in his favour by the mollah's father and friends.

Never was breast torn by so many contending feelings as mine, upon hearing the fate that had befallen my companion, as related to me by the barber. In the first place, I bemoaned the loss of my horse and his rich trappings, and of my fine shawl dresses; but in the next, I enjoyed a feeling of security when I considered, that if poor Nadân should happen to lose his head, no account would ever be asked from me of my late iniquities. I still could not help looking upon myself as one under the protection of a good star, whilst the mollah, I concluded, was inevitably doomed to be un-

fortunate: else why should we have exchanged clothes, and he taken my horse from me, at a time when I was in no way inclined to accede to his proposals? But, notwithstanding there was every likelihood that he would suffer the punishment due to me, still, for the present, I could not feel myself secure so long as I remained in Persia, and therefore determined to proceed upon my original intention, and quit it without further delay. I consoled myself for the loss of the horse and clothes, by the possession of the remaining ninety-five tomauns, which would be sufficient for my present wants; and then those powerful words, *Khoda buzurg est!* God is great, stood me in lieu (as they do many a poor wretch besides) of a provision for the future, and of protection against all the unforeseen misfortunes preparing for us by the hand of fate.

CHAPTER XV.

Hajji Baba hears an extraordinary sequel to his adventure in the bath, and feels all the alarms of guilt.

Having equipped myself as a merchant, for I had long since determined to abandon the character of a priest, considering how ill I had succeeded in it, I sought out the conductor of a caravan, which was on its road to Kermanshah, and bargained with him for the hire of a mule. He had a spare one, that had run unloaded from Tehran, and which he let me have for a trifle; and as I had no baggage but what I carried on my back, my beast and I agreed very well together.

We reached our destination on the seventh day, and here I was obliged to look out for a fresh conveyance. I was informed that none was likely to offer under a month,

because, owing to the Cûrdish robbers, who infested the frontier, no caravan ventured on the road unless its numbers were considerable, and it would take some time to collect them; but I was told that a caravan of pilgrims and dead bodies had set off for Kerbelah only the day before, and that, with a little exertion, I might easily overtake them before they had reached the dangerous passes.

Constantly apprehensive of being discovered and detained, I did not hesitate upon the course to adopt, and forthwith set off on foot. My money was safely deposited in my girdle; and without any other baggage than a good staff in my hand, I left Kermanshah, and proceeded on my road.

On the evening of the third day, when nearly exhausted with fatigue, my eyes were cheered by the sight of fires at a distance, the smoke of which curled up over the brow of a hill; and approaching them, I discovered cattle spread over the plain grazing, and thus was not mistaken in sup-

posing that the caravan was nigh at hand. As I advanced towards the baggage, which was piled up in a hollow square, and where I knew that I should find the conductor, I observed a small white tent, pitched at some little distance, which indicated that pilgrims of consequence were of the party; and, moreover, that women were amongst them, for a *Takhteravan* (a litter) and a *Kejaweh* (panniers) were seen near the tent.

I gave myself out for a pilgrim, and found the conductor very ready to furnish me with a mule for my conveyance. I was anxious to pass unnoticed, considering the predicament in which I stood; but still the conscious dignity which the ninety-five pieces of gold in my girdle gave me made it difficult for me to restrain that vanity of display so common to all my countrymen.

Among the baggage, at a small distance from the square, in which I was seated, were several long and narrow pack-

ages sewn up in thick felts, which were spread in pairs upon the ground, apparently having been unloaded there from the backs of camels. I inquired what they might be, for the sight of them was new to me, and was informed that they contained dead bodies bound to Kerbelah.

'It is evident you are a stranger,' said the conductor, who appeared to be as loquacious and mother-witted as those of his profession generally are, 'or, otherwise you would have been better informed. We are carrying rare things to Kerbelah!'

'Yes,' said I, 'I am a stranger; I come from afar, and am like one descended from the mountains. In God's name, what are you carrying to Kerbelah?'

'What!' answered he, 'have you heard nothing of the extraordinary death of the Mollah Bashi of Tehran; how he died in the bath; and how his ghost was seen on horseback, and then in his harem; and

how it afterwards ran off with one of the chief executioner's best horses? Where have you been living all this while?' added he, shaking both his hands before him as he spoke, and shrugging up his shoulders.

Alarmed at what he had said, I pretended ignorance; and requested him to satisfy my curiosity concerning the story in question, which he did in a manner that, but for my being so deeply implicated in it, would have afforded me much amusement.

'You must know then,' said the muleteer, 'that what I am about to relate is true, because I was on the spot in person, at the time it happened.

'The chief priest having gone to the bath at the close of day, just after the evening prayer, returned to his house surrounded by his servants, and retired to bed for the night in the *khelwet* of his women's apartments.

'You need not be told that most of the public baths in Persia are open to the women the first thing in the morning, to a

certain hour in the day, and are then appropriated to the men. The wife of the Mollah Bashi, attended by her servants and slaves, the morning after her husband had bathed, at the earliest sound of the cow horn, proceeded to the same bath, and she and her suite were the first party who entered it on that day. Out of respect to their mistress, none of her attendants ventured to get into the reservoir of hot water before her. The cupola of the bath was but very dimly lighted by the dawn; and the chief priest's wife was almost in utter darkness when she entered the water. Guess at her horror, when scarcely having proceeded two steps, her extended hand fell upon a large mass of floating flesh.

'Her first impulse was to utter an amazing shriek; her second to tumble headlong out as if she had been pursued, and straight to faint away.

'The consternation which she produced amongst her women may easily be conceived. One after the other, with the lamp in their

hand, they looked in, shrieked, and then run back, not one among them having yet discovered what was the object of their terror.

'At length the old duenna taking courage, looked boldly into the reservoir, and to her surprise she there found a dead man. More screams and cries ensued, which having brought the chief priest's wife to her senses, caused her to join the inspecting party. Little could be recognised of a floating corpse inflated with water, presenting various odd surfaces to the eye, and giving but little clue to discovery. At length the head and face appeared to view; and, as soon as the old duenna had applied her lamp to it, one and all cried out, 'O Ali! it is the Mollah Bashi; it is the Mollah Bashi!'

'The wife again fell into a trance; the slaves made their cries; in short, there was that stir amongst them, that one would have thought they had heard the 'blast of consternation from the trumpets of the resurrection.'

'But amidst all the wailing, which by

this time had attracted every woman in the building, one of the slaves cried out, 'But it cannot be our Aga, for I saw him return from the bath, I made his bed, and I am sure he was soon after asleep. It is impossible that he can be in bed and asleep, and in the bath, drowned, at one and the same time. It must be somebody else.'

'This observation threw them all into greater consternation than ever, because they immediately felt that what the slave had seen must have been her master's ghost. 'See,' said the wife,—who had again come to life,—pointing to the face of the corpse, 'I am sure this was my husband; there is the scratch I gave him but yesterday.'—'And there,' said one of her servants, 'that is the place in his beard from which you plucked a handful of hairs.'

'These tender recollections threw the poor widow into a violent flood of tears, which were only stopped by her slaves assuring her that the Mollah Bashi was still alive: 'How else could he have taken the lamp

from my hand?' said the slave—'how could he have shut the door? how dismissed me? how snored?' So persuaded was she of the truth of what she said, that she forthwith dressed herself, and volunteered to go to her master's bed-room, where no doubt she would find him asleep.

"'But if he is there,' said one of the women, 'then what can this be?' (pointing to the corpse.)

"'Why, this must be his ghost,' said another; 'for surely no man can possess two bodies,—one in which he lives, and the other by way of a change.'

"'No,' said a third in a waggish tone, 'that would be quite new. He might then make the same use of them as he would of a town and country house.'

'All this time, (many additional bathers having poured in) whilst those who were indifferent were speculating after this fashion, the chief priest's women were uttering loud and piercing shrieks, particularly when the slave returned and informed them that no

Mollah Bashi had she found, and that he had left no trace behind except the print of his body in the bed.

'The story had now got abroad, the bath was surrounded by a crowd, who pressed to gain admittance; and ere the women had had time to dress themselves, the place was full of men. Such a scene of confusion as then ensued had never before been witnessed in a public bath at Tehran. What with the wailing and lamentations of the women of the chief priest,—what with the noise and cries of those who inveighed against the intrusion of the men—the clamour was excessive.

'At length the friends and relations of the deceased appeared, and, with them, the washers of the dead, who immediately bore the corpse to the place of ablution, where it was embalmed, and prepared to perform its journey to Kerbelah, for thither it was judged expedient to send it for burial.

'His widow at once avowed her intention of accompanying the body; and my mules,'

added my informant, 'were hired on the occasion. The tent you see yonder is occupied by her and her slaves; and there,' pointing to the packages, 'lies the carcass of her husband. The accompanying dead bodies are the remains of those, who both at Tehran and on our road hither died about the time that this event took place, and are now sent to Kerbelah to be buried in the suite and under the protection of one who at the day of resurrection, it is hoped, may lend them a helping hand into paradise.'"

Here the conductor stopped, whilst I, who had been struck by the latter part of his speech, became almost mute from fear. I felt that having endeavoured to escape danger, I had fallen into its very mouth. Were I to be recognised by the chief priest's servants, some of whom I had known intimately, their knowledge of my person would lead to my discovery.

'But, what happened after the corpse was carried out of the bath?' said I, anxious to

know whether the clothes which I had left in one of its corners had been noticed.

'By the head of Ali!' said the man, 'I do not very well recollect. This I know, that many stories were in circulation; and every person had a different one. Some said that the chief priest, after being drowned, was seen in his *anderûn* and went to bed. Others that he appeared the next morning at the chief executioner's, and rode away with one of his best horses. The chief executioner himself shows a note of his, sealed with his seal, giving him permission to drink wine. In short, so many and so contradictory were the reports, that no one knew what to believe. All were puzzled to find out how he managed to get alive out of the bath, (for that is attested by his servants, and by the master of the bath), and still remain in the reservoir. Difficulties continued to increase as fast as people argued, until a discovery took place which threw a marvellous light upon the subject. Some clothes were

found in a dark corner of the bath. They were torn and in bad case; but without much difficulty they were known to have belonged to one Hajjî Baba, a drivelling priest, and an attendant upon that famous breeder of disturbance, the mollah Nadân, the open and avowed enemy of the head of the law. Then every body exclaimed, 'Hajjî Baba is the murderer! without doubt he is the murderer of the holy man, he must pay the price of blood!' and all the city was in full search for Hajjî Baba. Many said, that Nadân was the culprit; in short, messengers have been sent all over the country, to seize them both, and carry them dead or alive to Tehran. I only wish that my fate may be sufficiently on the ascent, to throw either of them into my hands; such a prize would be worth my whole mule-hire to Kerbelah.'

I leave every one to guess my feelings upon hearing this language; I who was never famous for facing difficulties with courage, and who would always rather as a

preliminary to safety make use of the swiftness of my heels, in preference to adopting any other measure. But here to retreat was more dangerous than to proceed; for in a very short time I should be in the territory of another government, until when, I promised faithfully to wrap myself up in the folds of my own counsel; and to continue my road with all the wariness of one who is surrounded by imminent danger.

CHAPTER XVI.

He is discovered and seized, but his good stars again befriend and set him free.

The caravan pursued its march early the next morning, and I took my station among the muleteers and the hangers on, (many of whom are always at hand), in order to screen myself from notice. The litter with the chief priest's widow, and her attendants, preceded the line of march, the camels with the bodies followed, and the remainder of the caravan, consisting principally of loaded mules, spread itself in a long straggling line over the road.

I envied every fellow who had a more ruffian-like face, or a more ragged coat than my own; so fearful was I of being thought good-looking enough to be noticed. More particularly I dreaded the approach of the widow's servants, for although I was dying

to know if any of them were of my acquaintance, yet I carefully turned my head on one side, as soon as there was the smallest likelihood of their looking towards me.

The first day's march had passed over in safety; and I laid my head on a projecting part of the baggage, where I slept sound through the night. I was equally fortunate on the second day, and with so much confidence did this success inspire me, that I began to be ambitious of associating with something better than a common mule-driver.

I had opened a conversation with one, who I was informed was an Armenian bishop; and had already made him understand how thankful he ought to be for being thus noticed by a true believer, when one of the much dreaded attendants rode by us, and in him I recognised the man who had endeavoured to palm off a *mutè* upon me, upon my first introduction to the mollah Nadân. My heart leapt into my mouth at the sight of him. The chief priest's ghost,

had it appeared, could not have frightened me more. I turned my head quickly on one side, but he passed on without heeding me; so for this time I was let off only with the fright; but I resolved to return to my humble station again, and forthwith left the bishop to his own meditations.

On the following day we were to pass through the defiles infested by the Cûrdish banditti, when every one would be too much taken up with his own safety to think of me. Once having passed them, we should no longer be in the Persian territory, and I might then claim protection of the Turks, in case I were discovered and seized.

On that eventful day, a day well remembered in the annals of my adventurous life, the caravan wore a military appearance. All those who possessed any thing in the form of a weapon brought it forth and made a display. The whole scene put me in mind of a similar one which I have recorded in the first pages of my history; when, in company with Osman Aga, we en-

countered an attack from the Turcomans. The same symptoms of fear showed themselves on this occasion as on that; and I am honest enough to own that time had not strengthened my nerves, nor given me any right to the title of lion-eater.

The whole caravan marched in compact order, marshalled by a chaoush and by the conductor, who, with the servants of the chief priest's wife, formed a sort of vanguard to the main body. I who had my own safety to consult for more reasons than one, huddled myself among the crowd, and enjoyed the idea that I was incumbered with no other property than the money in my girdle.

We were proceeding in silence; nothing was heard save the bells of the caravan, and I was deep in thought in what manner I might dispose of my ninety-five tomauns, on our arrival at Bagdad; when, turning up my eyes, I perceived the conductor and a well-equipped Persian riding towards me.

The conductor pointed with his hand

to me, and said to his companions, '*hem een est*,' this is even he!

'By the beard of Ali!' thought I, 'my good fortune has turned its back upon me.'

I looked at the conductor's companion, whom I instantly discovered to be the very Abdul Kerim, from whom I had extracted the one hundred tomauns, at the village of Seidabad, by means of the letter which I had written in the name of the deceased chief priest.

I was about giving myself up for lost, when the conductor relieved me a little, by saying, 'You are the last man who joined our caravan: perhaps you can tell us upon what part of the frontier Kelb Ali Khan, the robber, is said to be at present.'

I answered him in a great state of perturbation; but kept my eyes fixed upon Abdul all the while, who also began to stare at me with those penetrating eyes of his, which almost turned my heart inside out. He continued looking at me like one in doubt, whilst I endeavoured to sculk

away; but at length appearing to recollect himself, he exclaimed, 'I have it, I have it! it is the very man; he it was who laughed at my beard and stole the hundred tomauns. Then addressing himself to the bystanders, he said, 'If you want a thief, there is one. Seize him in the name of the Prophet!'

I began to expostulate, and to deny the accusation, and probably should have succeeded to convince those who surrounded us that I was wrongly accused, when, to my consternation, the promoter of matrimony came up, at once recognised me, and called me by my name. Then my whole history came to light. I was denounced as the murderer of the chief priest, and this event produced so general a bustle throughout the caravan, that fear of the robbers was for a while suspended, and every one came to gaze upon me.

I was seized, my hands were pinioned behind my back, I was about being dragged before the chief priest's widow to be exhi-

bited, when my good planet came to my help and showed its ascendant. Of a sudden a great cry was heard at a distance, and to my delight I beheld a body of cavaliers rushing down the slope of an adjacent hill. These were the very Cûrds so much dreaded. The consternation was universal, the whole caravan was thrown into confusion, and resistance was unavailing when both heart and hand were wanting. Those who were mounted ran away; the muleteers, anxious for the safety of their cattle, cut the ropes of their loads, which fell and were left spread on the plain to the mercy of the marauders. The camels were also disencumbered of their burthens, and coffins were to be seen in all parts of the road. I remarked that the one containing the chief priest had fallen into a rivulet, as if fate was not tired of drowning him. In short, the rout was universal and complete.

I soon was left to myself, and easily found means to disengage my bonds. I

perceived that the Cûrds had directed their attention principally to the litter and its attendants, where they naturally expected to find prisoners of consequence; and it rejoiced me to observe, that those whom but a few minutes before I had looked upon as destined to be the perpetrators of my ruin, and very possibly of my death, were now themselves thrown into a dilemma nearly equally disastrous with the one from which I was now relieved.

In vain the widow's attendants threatened, swore, and bade defiance; nothing would soften their wild and barbarous assailants, who, under some lawless pretext of fees to be paid, began a regular pillage of such parts of the caravan as had not fled their attack. I again had an opportunity of ascertaining that my good star was prevailing; for now, whilst those who possessed any article of dress which might give respectability to their appearance became the object of the robbers' attention,

I and my solitary mule had the satisfaction to find ourselves so totally unworthy of notice, that we proceeded without molestation on the original object of our journey. I owned no corpse—I was not called upon to pay duty upon a dead relation—I was free as air; and as soon as I once found myself released from the thousand miseries which had arisen all around me, and which, as if by magic, had been as quickly dispelled, I went on my way, exclaiming, '*Barikallah, ai talleh mun!* Well done, oh my good fortune!'

CHAPTER XVII.

He reaches Bagdad, meets his first master, and turns his views to commerce.

Leaving the Mollah Bashi's wisdow, her slaves, and attendants in the hands of the Cûrds, I made the best of my way to my destination; and caring little to hold converse with any one, after what had so recently taken place, I shaped my course in such a manner as not to attract observation.

Many stragglers, flying from the Cûrds, were to be seen on the road; but as they all, more or less, had interest in the fate of the caravan, they did not proceed far, but hovered about the scene of action, in the hopes of reclaiming either their friends or their property. I alone seemed to be totally independent, and by the time I had travelled two or three parasangs from the danger, I had the road to myself. Every

thing that had befallen me was turned over and over again in my mind, and I came to this conclusion, that powerfully protected as I seemed to be by fate, I might again turn my steps towards the paths of ambition, and hope that my last failure in the pursuits of advancement was to be made up by realizing a speedy and ample fortune.

'Ninety-five tomauns in my girdle, and all the world before me,' said I, 'is no insignificant prospect. And if Nadân be but blown from a mortar, and the chief priest's widow detained and ruined by the Cûrds, I do not see why I may not put my cap on one side as well as the best man in Persia.'

At length the walls and turrets of Bagdad appeared in view, and I entered the city a total stranger, and ignorant of its localities. Caravanserais I knew that I should find at every turn, and indifferent whither I bent my steps, or where I alighted, I let my mule take the road it

liked best. Well acquainted with every street, the animal took me to a large caravanserai, where it no doubt had long been accustomed to resort, and there stopping, gave several loud grunts as it entered the porch, in the expectation of meeting its companions of the caravan. Although disappointed, yet I was more fortunate (if fortunate I could call myself), in seeing some of my countrymen in the square, and I soon found out that this was their usual rendezvous.

My person, I flattered myself, could attract no notice, go where I might: but I was sorry to find it otherwise. Upon alighting I was assailed by a thousand questions—the caravan was hourly expected, the merchants were eager for the reception of their goods, and I might possibly give them some intelligence respecting it. I made such answers as were necessary for the occasion; but resolved within myself very soon to quit so inquisitive a society, and bury myself in obscurity.

I accordingly left my mule to its fate, reflecting that its owner would very soon arrive and take possession of it, and straightway settled myself in another part of the city.

As a first step towards preserving my incognito, I exchanged my dusty and weather-beaten sheep's-skin cap for a head-dress of the country, namely, a long red cloth bag, which fell down in a flap behind, and fastened to my head with a party-coloured silk. I also bought a second-hand *beniche*, or cloak, usually worn by the Turks, which, going over my Persian garments, gave me the general appearance of an Osmanli; and finished my adjustment by a pair of bright crimson leather slippers.

Having done this, it came into my head that much good might accrue if I made myself known to the family of my first master, Osman Aga, for through them I might make acquaintance in the city, and promote my views in trade.

I accordingly sallied forth, and took my road through the principal bazars and bezestens, in order to make inquiries, and particularly stopped where lambskins were sold, for I well recollected that they were his favourite article of trade. I also recollected many particulars concerning Bagdad, which he used to take pleasure in relating during our journeys, and I fancied that I could almost find my way to his very door without inquiry.

However, my trouble was soon at an end, for in putting my head into the shop of one of the principal Bokhara merchants, and inquiring if any news had reached Bagdad of one Osman Aga, I heard a well-known voice, in answer, say, 'Who wants me? In the name of the Prophet, I am he!'

Guess at my joy and surprise—it was the old man himself. I was almost as much astonished to see him at Bagdad, as I had before been to meet him at Tehran, and his surprise was equal to mine. I

related as much of my history as I thought it necessary for him to know, and he told me his in return, which in two words was as follows.

He had left Tehran in the determination of proceeding to Constantinople, there to dispose of his merchandize, but hearing that great danger of being robbed existed on the road between Erivan and Arz Roum, he had deemed it a safer plan to visit Bagdad; and here he was, restored to his native city after an absence of many years. He had found his son grown up to man's estate, who, having gone through all the ceremony of mourning for his loss, had duly taken possession of his patrimony, which, according to the law, he had shared in the prescribed portions between his mother and sister. But as soon as his father was restored to him, he made no wry faces, but, like a good Musulman, put into practice that precept of the Koran which ordaineth man to show kindness to his parents—but not to say unto them 'Fie upon you!' The old

man added, that he had found his wife alive, and that his daughter was old enough to be married.

But having thus disburthened himself of this short history of his adventures, he turned round upon me in a sharper manner than he had ever done before, and said, 'But Hajjî, my friend, in the name of the blessed Mohammed, what could have possessed you to join me to that female Satan at Tehran, by way of making me pass my time agreeably? By the salt which we have so often eat together, the few days that I passed in her company were filled with more misery than was the whole time I spent among the Turcomâns! Was it right to treat an old friend thus?'

I assured him that I had no object in view but his happiness, taking it for granted that she, who had been the favourite of the monarch of Persia, must, even in her later days, have had charms more than enough for one who had passed some of the best years of his life with camels.

'Camels!' exclaimed Osman, 'camels, indeed! they are angels compared to this fury. Would to Heaven that you had married me to a camel instead, for it, at least, poor animal, would have sat quiet, with calm and thoughtful gravity, and let me have my own way; whereas your dragon, she, the viper, she passed her whole time in telling me how vastly honoured I was in having taken to wife one who had led the Shah by the beard, and enforced each word with either a slap or a scratch. *Amân! Amân!*' said the old man, rubbing his hand on his cheek, 'I think I feel them now.'

He at length ceded to my assurances that I had no other object in view than his happiness, and then very kindly asked me to take up my abode at his house during my stay at Bagdad, to which, of course, I acceded with all manner of pleasure.

This conversation had taken place in the back room of the Bokhara merchant's shop, during which the old man had treated me to five paras worth of coffee, brought from

a neighbouring coffee-house; and when it was over, he proposed going to his son's shop, situated in the same bazar, some few doors farther on. His son's name was Suleiman. Having set himself up in the cloth trade during his father's long absence, he had acquired an easy livelihood, and passed the greatest part of the day (except when necessary to go to his prayers) seated in the little platform in the front of his shop, surrounded by his merchandize, neatly arranged on shelves fixed in the wall. He was a fat, squat little man, very like his father; and when he was informed that I was Hajjî Baba, he said that I was welcome, and taking the pipe which he was smoking from his own mouth, he immediately transferred it to mine.

These preliminaries of mutual good-will being established, I enjoyed the prospect of an easy and quiet sojourn at Bagdad, in the company of these good people; but in order to show that I did not intend wholly to be a dependent upon them, I made it known

that I was possessed of ninety-five tomauns, and asked their opinion upon the mode of laying them out to the best advantage in trade. I gave them to understand that, tired of the buffetings of an adventurer's life, it was my intention for the future to devote my time to securing an independence by my own industry. Many had acquired wealth from beginnings much smaller than mine, said I; to which they both agreed: and, as we anticipated the fortune that I was to make, Osman Aga gravely let off the only bit of Persian poetry which he had picked up during his travels—'Drop by drop water distilleth from the rock, till at length it becometh a sea.'

Upon this conclusion we, that is, the father and I, proceeded to his house, which was situated at a convenient distance from the bazars.

CHAPTER XVIII.

He purchases pipe-sticks, and inspires a hopeless passion in the breast of his old master's daughter.

Osman Aga's house was situated in a narrow lane, leading out of the street which leads into one of the principal bazars. Immediately in front of the door was a heap of rubbish, upon which a litter of kittens had just been thrown, making an essay of their young voices as we passed; and a little further, on a similar mound, a colony of puppies had been planted, guarded by a mangy mother, which, by their united cries, left us nothing to desire in the way of discord. Between these was situated the gate of Osman Aga's house, into which we entered. It was a small building, consisting of some crazy rooms, which neither indicated riches nor cleanliness. As I had no baggage belonging to me, except a small carpet,

my removal here from the caravanserai was soon accomplished, and I took up my future abode in a corner of mine host's principal room, where he also spread his bed and slept.

By way of celebrating my arrival, he treated me with roasted lamb, and an abundant dish of rice, to which were added dates, cheese, and onions. The dishes were cooked in the harem, by the hands of his wife and daughter, aided by a female slave, the only domestic in the establishment. Neither of these had I yet seen, for it was dusk when we reached the house; nor, from good manners, did I ask more about them than Osman was inclined to tell me.

Besides myself and his son, the old man had invited a brother dealer in lambskins to the entertainment, with whom he had formed a close intimacy during his travels in Bokhara. The conversation turned exclusively upon commerce, about which I was so ignorant, that I took very little share in it, although, considering that it was my

intention to enter it myself, I was very happy to open my ears to all that was said.

They entered deeply into the subject, and discussed the relative merits of each article of trade. To hear them talk, one might have inferred that the end of the world was at hand, because it was rumoured that the price of their favourite commodity had fallen at Constantinople. They dissuaded me from embarking my capital in that article, but recommended in preference that I should invest it in pipe-sticks, which, they remarked, were subject to no decay, and for which there was a constant demand in the market of Constantinople.

The entertainment being over, and the guests having parted, I ruminated deeply upon what I had heard, and forthwith turned the whole weight of my thoughts to pipe-sticks. There, in a corner, I sat all day calculating what number of pipes I might acquire for my tomauns, and what

would be my profit when sold at Constantinople; and when my imagination was heated by the hopes of the ultimate fortune that might be realized, I gave myself up to the most extravagant expectations. The plan of the merchant, whom Saadi relates he met in the island of Kish, was trifling when compared to the one which I formed. 'With the produce of my pipe-sticks,' said I, 'I will buy figs at Smyrna, which I will take to Europe, and having made great profit by them there, my money shall then be invested in skull-caps, which I will carry to Grand Cairo; these being sold in detail, for ready cash, I will carefully pack my money in sacks, and proceed to Ethiopia, where I will purchase slaves, each of whom I will sell for great profit at Moccha, and thence I will make the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet. From Moccha I will transport coffee to Persia, which will fetch an amazing price; and then I will repose in my native city, until I can purchase a high situation at court, which may in time

lead me to become the grand vizier to the King of Kings.'

Having thus disposed of the future in my favour, I set myself actively to work in laying in my merchandize. According to the most approved method, I made a bargain with a wood-cutter, who was to proceed to the mountains of Lour and Bakhtiari, where he would find forests of the wild cherry-tree, from which he would make his selections, according to the sizes with which I should furnish him. He was then to return to Bagdad, where the sticks would be bored, and made up into appropriate parcels for the markets of Turkey.

All this was duly executed; but during the time that I was waiting for the return of the wood-cutter, I was attacked by a disorder, from which few residents, as well as strangers, at Bagdad are exempt, which terminating by a large pimple, as it dries up, leaves an indelible mark on the skin. To my great mortification, it broke out upon the middle of my right cheek, imme-

diately upon the confines of the beard, and there left its baleful print, destroying some of the most favourite of my hairs, and making that appear a broken and irregular waste, which before might be likened to a highly cultivated slope.

I bore this calamity as well as I was able, although I could not help frequently quarrelling with fate, for having chosen so conspicuous a spot to place that which might have been so conveniently settled any where else.

'So be it,' said I, heaving a sigh at the same time; 'the wise man said true when he remarked, 'if every stone was left to choose what it would be, most probably it would be a diamond;' and if every man might choose whereabouts he would have his pimple, there would be no ugly faces in Bagdad.'

However, by way of consolation, I recollected that Osman Aga's face was the mirror of deformity, although his pimple had budded elsewhere. He, instead of

condoling with me on my misfortune, rather seemed to enjoy it.

'Hajjî,' said he to me, 'if you are not afflicted with any greater calamity than this in life, look upon it as a blessing: although one side of your face be deformed, still the other is perfect. The turquoise is the perfection of colour on one side, but is black and dirty on the other; still it is a turquoise, and a precious stone.'

'Ah,' said I to myself, 'the ugly man cannot endure the sight of the handsome, no more than the vicious can the virtuous: in the same manner as the curs of the market howl at a hunting dog, but dare not approach him.'

Notwithstanding the deformity of my cheek, I found as I continued to be an inmate in the house of my old master, that I had made no small impression upon the heart of his daughter, the fair Dilaram, who, by a thousand little arts, did not fail to make me acquainted with the state of her affections. Her mother and she were

both experienced in the mode of curing the Bagdad disorder, and they undertook to superintend mine. My pimple and Dilaram's love appear to have risen at about the same time; their progress was mutual, and by the time that the former had risen to its full height, the latter had become quite inconvenient.

I, 'tis true, had not caught the infection; for my charmer was the very image of her father, whose face and that of an old camel's were so entirely identified in my mind, that I never could lose that ugly association of ideas when I gazed upon her. It was therefore a considerable relief to me when the season for travelling approached, and when the caravan for Constantinople was about to assemble. My pipe-sticks were collected and packed into their proper bundles, my accounts with my creditors regularly discharged, my wardrobe complete, and I was all delight when it was announced, that at the very next favourable conjunction of the planets the caravan was to take its de-

parture. But as for poor Dilaram, she hovered about my cheek with looks of despair; and as fast as the swelling subsided, she appeared to lose the only tie which kept her united to this world and its vanities.

CHAPTER XIX.

He becomes a merchant, leaves Bagdad, and accompanies a caravan to Constantinople.

It was a fine spring morning when the caravan took its departure from the Constantinople gate of the city.

Mounted on the top of one of my loads, with my bed tied on the pad by way of a soft seat, and my bags surrounding me, I contemplated the scene with pleasure, listened to the bells of the mules as I would to music, and surveyed myself as a merchant of no small consequence.

My more immediate companions were Osman Aga, and his associate in lambskins (he of whom I have already made honourable mention at the entertainment), and one or two other Bagdad merchants; but besides, there were many of my own countrymen, natives of different cities of Persia,

all bound upon purposes of trade to Constantinople, and with whom I was more or less acquainted. My adventure with the chief priest of Tehran had in great measure blown over; and indeed the dress I had adopted, with the scar on my cheek, made me look so entirely like a native of Bagdad, that I retained little in my appearance to remind the world that I was in fact a Persian.

I will not tire the reader with a recital of our adventures through Turkey, which consisted of the usual fear of robbers, squabbles with muleteers, and frays at caravanserais. It will be sufficient to say, that we reached our destination in safety; but I cannot omit the expression of my first emotions upon seeing Constantinople.

I, a Persian, and an Ispahani, had ever been accustomed to hold my native city as the first in the world: never had it crossed my mind that any other could, in the smallest degree, enter into competition with it, and when the capital of Roum was de-

scribed to me as finer, I always laughed the describer to scorn. But what was my astonishment, and I may add mortification, on beholding, for the first time, this magnificent city! I had always looked upon the royal mosque, in the great square at Ispahan, as the most superb building in the world; but here were an hundred finer, each surpassing the other in beauty and in splendour. Nothing, did I ever conceive, could equal the extent of my native place; but here my eyes became tired with wandering over the numerous hills and creeks thickly covered with buildings, which seemed to bid defiance to calculation. If Ispahan was half the world, this indeed was the whole. And then this gem of cities possesses this great advantage over Ispahan, that it is situated on the borders of a beautiful succession of waters, instead of being surrounded by arid and craggy mountains; and in addition to its own extent and beauty, enjoys the advantage of being reflected in one never-failing mirror, ever at hand to

multiply them. But where should I stop, if I attempted to describe the numerous moving objects which attracted my attention? Thousands of boats, of all forms and sizes, skimmed along in every direction, whilst the larger vessels, whose masts looked like forests, more numerous than those of Mazanderan, lined the shores of the intricate and widely extended harbour.

'O, this is a paradise,' said I to those around me; 'and may I never leave it!' But when I recollected in whose hands it was, possessed by a race of the most accursed of heretics, whose beards were not fit to be brooms to our dust-holes, then I thought myself too condescending in allowing them to possess me amongst them. One consolation, however, I did not fail to derive from reflection, which was, that if they were allowed the possession of so choice a spot for their use in this world, they would doubly feel the horror of that which was doubtless preparing for them in the next.

After undergoing the necessary forms

and examinations at the custom-house, I and my companions took boat at Scutari, crossed over to Constantinople, and established ourselves and merchandize in a large caravanserai, the resort of Persian traders, situated in a very central part of the city, near the principal bazars. I felt myself a slender personage indeed, when I considered that I was only one among the crowd of the immense population that was continually floating through the great thoroughfares. And when I saw the riches displayed in the shops, the magnificence of dress of almost every inhabitant, and the constant succession of great lords and agas, riding about on the finest and most richly caparisoned horses, I could not help exclaiming, in a secret whisper to myself, where is Constantinople and her splendours, and where Persia and her poverty?

I, in conjunction with old Osman, hired a room in the caravanserai, in which we deposited our merchandize. During the daytime I displayed my pipe sticks in goodly

rows on a platform; and as my assortments were good, I began my sales with great vigour, and reaped considerable profit. In proportion as I found money returning to my purse, so did I launch out into luxuries which I little heeded before. I increased the beauty and conveniencies of my dress; I bought a handsome amber-headed chibouk; I girded my waist with a lively-coloured shawl; my tobacco pouch was made of silk, covered with spangles; my slippers were of bright yellow, and I treated myself to a glittering dagger. Temptations to expense surrounded me every where, and I began to think that there was something worth living for in this world. So numerous were the places in which I might exhibit my person in public, that I could not refrain from visiting the most frequented coffee-houses, where, mounted on a high bench, with soft cushions to recline upon, I smoked my pipe and sipped my coffee like one of the highest degree.

Implicated as I had been in disagreeable adventures in Persia, I was mistrustful of my own countrymen, and rather shunned them, whilst I sought the acquaintance of the Turks. But they, my countrymen, who are always so inquisitive, and who feel themselves slighted upon the least inattention, they discovered who and what I was, and eyed me with no great feelings of approbation. However, I endeavoured to live upon good terms with them; and as long as we did not enter into competition in matters of trade, they left me unmolested.

In places of public resort I gave myself out for a rich Bagdad merchant; and now my scar, which I had before esteemed a great misfortune, was conveniently conspicuous to attest the truth of my assertions. Nothing, I found, was so easy as to deceive the Turks by outward appearance. Their taciturnity, the dignity and composure of their manner and deportment, their slow walk, their set phrases, were all so easy to acquire, that in the course of a very short

time I managed to imitate them so well, that I could at pleasure make myself one of the dullest and most solemn of their species. So perfect a hearer had I become, so well did I sigh out, every now and then, in soft accents, my sacred ejaculations of 'Allah! and there is but one Allah!' and so steady was I in counting my beads, that I was received at the coffee-house, which I frequented, with distinguished attention. The owner of it himself made my coffee, and as he poured it out with a high flourish of his arm, he never failed to welcome me by the friendly epithets of 'my Aga, my Sultan.' Such influence had the respectability of my appearance secured for me, that in every trifling dispute which might take place in the coffee-room, either upon the subjects of horses, dogs, arms, or tobacco (the principal topics of conversation), I was ever referred to, and any low growl from my lips, of either *belli* (yes), or *yok* (no), was sure to set the matter at rest.

CHAPTER XX.

Hajji Baba makes a conquest of the widow of an Emir, which at first alarms, but afterwards elates him.

I HAD lived in this manner for some time, when for three successive evenings, towards the dusk, retiring from my coffee-house, I remarked an old woman standing at the corner of a small street that nearly faced it. She always gazed intensely at me, seemed desirous to speak, looked up every now and then at the latticed windows of the house, at the foot of which she had taken post, and then allowed me to pass on. The first time I scarcely took notice of her, an old woman standing at the corner of a street being nothing remarkable; but, on the second, I became surprised, and was on my guard; the third roused all my curiosity, and on the fourth evening I deter-

mined, if she appeared again, to discover what could be her meaning.

Accordingly I dressed myself rather better than usual, having taken it for granted that my good looks, added to the protection of my good planet, were at work for me; and issuing forth from the coffee-house, I walked with a slow and sauntering step towards the mysterious woman. I was about accosting her, when, as I turned the angle of the street that screened me from the windows of the coffee-house, of a sudden a lattice of the house before-mentioned was thrown open, and an unveiled female presented herself to my sight, whose face and form appeared to me of the most dazzling beauty. A flower was in her hand, which she first held out to my notice, then placed it on her heart, threw it to me, and then shut the lattice in such haste, that the whole scene was like an apparition which had shown itself, and then suddenly disappeared. I stood with my mouth open, and my eyes directed upwards, until I was

gently pulled by the sleeve by the old woman, who had picked up the flower, and was presenting it to me as I looked round upon her.

'What is this,' said I, 'in the name of the Prophet? Are there Gins and Peris in this land?'

'Are you such a novice,' answered the old woman, 'not to know what that flower means? Your beard is long enough, you are not a child, and your dress proclaims that you have travelled; but you have travelled to little purpose, if you know not what a lady means when she gives you an almond flower.'

'O yes,' said I, 'I know that *fistek* almond rhymes to *yastek* pillow; and I also know that two heads upon one pillow have frequently been compared to two kernels in one almond; but my beard is long enough to remind me also, that such things do not happen without danger, and that the heads may be cut off, as well as the kernels swallowed up.'

'Fear nothing,' said my companion with great emotion, 'by the holy Mohamed, we are clean ones, and you despise fortune, if you reject us. Are you an ass, that you should start at a shadow? for such are your fears.'

'Tell me then,' said I, 'who is the lady I have just seen, and what am I to do?'

'Be not in such a hurry,' answered she; 'nothing can be done to-night, and you must have patience. Time and place are not now convenient; but meet me to-morrow at noon, at the cemetery of Eyúb, and you will hear all that you wish to know. I shall be seated at the foot of the tomb of the first emir on your right hand, and you will recognise me from any other woman by a red shawl, thrown over my left shoulder. Go, and Allah go with you!'

Upon this we parted, and I returned to my room in the caravanserai to ruminate over what had happened. I did not doubt that something good was in store for me; but I had heard terrible accounts of the

jealousy of Turkish husbands, and could not help imagining that I might fall a victim to the fury of some much-injured man. Zeenab and her tower, Mariam and her Yûsuf, Dilaram and her pimple, all the instances of unfortunate loves, came across my mind in succession, and damped any desire that I might at first have felt in prosecuting this adventure. However, my blood was yet young and warm enough to carry me forwards, and I determined, though reluctantly, to proceed.

On the noon of the ensuing day I faithfully kept my engagement, looked for the first green-turbaned tomb, which I duly found on my right hand, where I discovered the old woman with her red shawl over her left shoulder. We retired from the roadside, and retreated to the shade of some of the loftiest cypress trees in the burial-ground; where, seated on the ground, with the magnificent view of the harbour of Constantinople before us, we calmly entered upon the subject of our conference.

She first complimented me upon my punctuality, and then again assured me, that I had nothing to fear from what she was about to propose. She had all the garrulity of her age, and spoke for some time but to little purpose, making professions of her attachment, and of her desire to serve me; all of which I foresaw would ultimately diminish the profits of my pipe-sticks, and I therefore stopped her progress, and requested her at once to let me know the history of the fair lady at the window.

Divesting her narrative of all her repetitions and circumlocutions, she spoke nearly to the following effect:—

'The lady whom you saw, and whose servant I am, is the only daughter of a rich Aleppo merchant, who, besides her, had two sons. The father died not long ago, and was succeeded in his business by his sons, who are now wealthy merchants, and reside in this city. My mistress, whose name is *Shekerleb*, or Sugar-lips, was married when very young to an old, but rich

Emir, who scrupulously refrained from having more than one wife at a time, because from experience he knew that he could have no peace at home if he took advantage of the permissions of his law in multiplying to himself his female companions. He was very fond of domestic quiet, and therefore hoped, by taking one so young, he might be able to mould her to his wishes, and that she would never thwart him in his inclinations. In that he was fortunate, for a more gentle and docile creature than my mistress does not exist. There was only one point upon which they could never agree, which proved indeed one of the causes of the Emir's death, which happened soon after. She liked tarts made with cream, and he preferred his with cheese. On this subject, regularly for five years they daily at breakfast had a dispute, until, about six months ago, the old man, having eat over much of his favourite cheese-tarts, had an indigestion and died. He bequeathed one-fourth of his wealth, the house which you

saw, his furniture, his slaves, in short, all that he could leave according to the Mahomedan law, to the fair Shekerleb, now his disconsolate widow. With the advantages of youth, beauty, and riches, you may be certain that she has not lived without admirers; but she has wisdom and discretion beyond most young women of her age, and hitherto has resisted forming any new tie, resolving to wait until some good opportunity, to marry one whom she might really love, and who would neither be swayed by interest nor ambition.

'Living opposite to one of the most fashionable coffee-houses in the city, she has had an opportunity of watching those who frequent it; and without a compliment, I need not say that she soon distinguished you as the handsomest amongst them, and indeed, as the man most to her fancy whom she had ever seen. My brother,' said the old woman, 'is the owner of the coffee-house, and as the opportunities of seeing him are frequent, I requested him to inquire

who you were; and to let me know what sort of a character you bore. His report was such as highly pleased my mistress; and we resolved to endeavour to make you notice us, and if possible to get acquainted with you. You best know how we have succeeded, and now will be able to judge whether I have rendered you a service or not.'

Little did I expect to hear such a result when first the old woman began her tale. I now felt like one who had received his reprieve after condemnation. Instead of the mysteries, disguises, scaling of walls and windows, drawn scimetars, and bloody wounds attendant on a Turkish intrigue, I saw nothing before me but riches, ease, and repose from all future care. I blessed my star; in short, I held my fortune to be made. I was so transported at what I heard, that I made use of a thousand incoherent expressions to my companion; I protested and vowed eternal love to her mistress, and

promised the most liberal remuneration to herself.

'But there is one circumstance,' said she, 'which my mistress has ordered me to ascertain before she can receive you; which is, the respectability of your family and the extent of your fortune. You must know that her brothers and relations are very proud; and if she were to make an unworthy alliance, they would treat her with the greatest harshness, and not fail to illtreat if not to make away with her husband.'

Although I was not prepared for this, yet such was the quickness with which I had seized the whole extent of the good fortune awaiting me, that with the same quickness I without hesitation said, 'Family? Family, did you say? Who is there that does not know Hajjî Baba? Let him inquire from the confines of Yemen to those of Irâk, and from the seas of Hind to the shores of the Caspian, and his name will be well known.'

'But who was your father?' said the old woman.

'My father?' said I, after a pause; 'he was a man of great power. More heads came under his thumb, and he took more men with impunity by the beard, than even the chief of the Wahabi himself.'

I had now gained sufficient time to arrange a little off-hand genealogy for myself; and as the old woman's countenance expanded at what I had said, I continued to speak to her after this manner:

'If your mistress wants high blood, then let her look to me. Be assured, that she and her brothers, be they who they may, will never exceed me in descent. Arab blood flows in my veins, and that of the purest kind. My ancestor was a Mansouri Arab, from the province of Nejd in Arabia Felix, who with the whole of his tribe was established by Shah Ismael of Persia in some of the finest pastures of Irâk, and where they have lived ever since. My great ancestor *Kâtir, ben Khur, ben Asp, ben Al*

Madian, was of the tribe of Koreish, and that brought him in direct relationship with the family of our blessed Prophet, from whom all the best blood of Islam flows.'

'Allah, Allah!' exclaimed the old woman, 'enough, enough. If you are all this, my mistress wants no more. And if your riches are equal to your birth, we shall be entirely satisfied.'

'As for my riches,' said I, 'I cannot boast of much cash; but what merchant ever has cash at command? You must know as well as myself, that it is always laid out in merchandise, which is dispersed over different parts of the world, and which in due time returns back to him with increase. My Persian silks and velvets are now travelling into Khorassan, and will bring me back the lamb-skins of Bokhara. My agents, provided with gold and otter skins, are ready at Meshed to buy the shawls of Cashmire, and the precious stones of India. At Astracan, my cotton stuffs are to be bartered against sables, cloth, and glass ware; and

the Indian goods which I buy at Bassorah and send to Aleppo are to return to me in the shape of skull-caps and shalli stuffs. In short, to say precisely what I am worth, would be as difficult as to count the ears in a field of wheat; but you may safely tell your mistress that the man of her choice, whenever he gathers his wealth together, will astonish her and her family by its extent.'

'Praise be to Allah!' said the confidant, 'all is now as it should be, and it only remains to make you acquainted with each other. You must not fail to be at the corner of the street at night-fall, when with all the necessary precautions you will be introduced to the divine Shekerleb; and if she approves of you, nothing will interpose to defer your marriage and your happiness. There is only one piece of advice which I have to give; that is, be sure to like cream-tarts, and to disapprove of cheese ones. Upon every other topic she is liberal and

without prejudice. May Allah keep you in peace and safety !'

So saying, she drew up the lower part of her veil over her mouth ; and receiving two pieces of gold without a struggle, which I put into her hand, she walked away, and left me again to my meditations.

CHAPTER XXI.

He obtains an interview with the fair Shekerleb, makes a settlement upon her, and becomes her husband.

I DID not long remain at the foot of the tree, for I felt that much was to be done before the time of assignation. It would be necessary to put on an appearance of wealth, to have a purse well furnished, and a dress suited to my character; and moreover, it quite behoved me to make my person as acceptable as possible by going to the bath, and using all the requisite perfumes. Frequently as I walked along did I apostrophize myself in terms of the highest approbation. 'Ahi Hajjî, friend Hajjî,' would I exclaim, 'by the beard of your father, and by your own soul, for this once you have shown the difference between a fool and a sage. Well done, thou descend-

ant from the Mansouris! thou scion of the root of Koreish!'

Deeply pondering over my future destinies, at length I reached my caravanserai. I saw the old Osman seated in one corner of our apartment, calculating the profits of his merchandise, and in the other I observed my bundle of pipe-sticks. The contrast which these ignoble objects formed to the great schemes then planning in my mind struck me so forcibly, that it affected my ordinary deportment, and gave a certain tone of superiority to my manner which I had never before felt. I know not whether it was noticed by Osman; but he seemed rather startled when I asked him immediately to advance me fifty gold pieces, for which I offered to deliver over my merchandise as security.

'My son,' said he, 'what news is this? what can you want with so much money, and in such haste? Are you mad, or are you become a gambler?'

'God forgive me,' answered I, 'I am

neither a madman nor a gambler. My brain is in good order, and the world has taken me into favour; but give me the money, and you will hear the rest hereafter.'

He did not longer hesitate to accede to my wishes, for he well knew the value of my goods, and that the transaction could not fail to be safe and profitable. So without further hesitation he counted out the money, and I forthwith left him.

I immediately bought some very handsome additions to my wardrobe, and proceeded without delay to the bath, where I went through all the necessary lustrations, and attired myself like a man of the highest fashion.

By the time that my new arrangements were complete, the hour of assignation had arrived, and with a beating heart I proceeded to the place appointed.

I found the old woman waiting, and having looked well round to see that nobody remarked us, she introduced me into

the house through a door situated in a remote corner.

I was charmed at the great ease and comfort which appeared to exist throughout the whole establishment; for I now looked upon myself as lord and master of all I saw. We had entered at once into the apartments kept sacred for the use of the women, because it seems that the principal entrance of the house had been but little used since the emir's death, out of reverence to his memory; and the same sort of mystery and precaution in entering here was kept up as if the good man was still in existence. Having passed through the small street-door, we entered into a court-yard, in which was a fountain. We then ascended a wooden flight of steps, at the top of which we found a cloth curtain, composed of various colours, which being lifted up, I was introduced into an ante-room, the only furniture of which consisted of women's slippers and a lamp. Four doors, which were now closed, opened upon this, and

here I was left to myself, whilst my old conductress shuffled off to prepare her mistress for my reception. I heard voices in the different apartments, the owners of which I presumed belonged to the slippers; and imagined that many eyes were directed at me, for I could distinguish them through the crannies. At length the door at the furthest angle was opened, and I was beckoned to approach.

My heart beat within me as I stepped forwards, and covering myself close with the flaps of my cloak, in order to show my respect, I entered a room that was lighted up by only one lamp, which shed a soft and dubious light over the objects within it.

It was surrounded by a divan, covered with the richest light blue satins fringed with gold, in one angle of which, near the window, was seated the object of all my desires. She was carefully veiled from head to foot, and all I could then distinguish of her person was a pair of brilliant black eyes, that seemed to delight in the anxious

curiosity which they had roused in my features.

She pointed to me with her hand to be seated; but this I obstinately refused, so anxious was I to show the depth of my respect and gratitude. At length, when further resistance was useless, I took off my slippers, and seated myself with a corner of my hip just resting upon the edge of the sofa, keeping my hands covered with the sleeves of my garment, and affecting a coyness and a backwardness, at which, now that I recollect myself, I cannot help laughing.

After we had sat facing each other for some few minutes, little, except common-place compliments, having passed, my fair mistress ordered the old Ayesha (for that was the name of my conductress) to leave the room, and then leaning forwards, as if to take up her fan of peacock's feathers, which was on the cushion, she permitted her veil to fall, and exhibited to my impatient eyes the most beautiful face that nature had ever formed.

This was the signal for laying by all reserve, and I prostrated myself before this divinity with all the adoration of a profound devotee, and poured out such a rhapsody of love and admiration, as to leave no doubt in her mind of the tenderness of my heart, the acuteness of my wit, and the excellence of my taste. In short, the emir's widow had every reason to be satisfied with the choice she had made; and she very soon showed the confidence which she intended to place in me, by making me at once the depositary of her secrets.

'I am in a difficult situation,' said she, 'and the evil eye which many cast upon me hath embittered my soul. You may conceive, that, owing to the wealth with which I have been endowed by my late husband (upon whom be eternal blessings!) and to my own dower besides, which was considerable, I have been tormented with many persecutions, and they have almost driven me mad. My relations all claim a right to me, as if I were part of the

family estate. My brothers have their own interest in view when they would negotiate a husband for me, as if they would barter a sack of wool against bags of rice. A nephew of my husband, a man of the law, pretends to claim an old custom, by which, when a man died, one of his relations had a right to his widow, which he might assert by throwing his cloak over her. Another relation again pretends, that according to the law, I am not entitled to the whole of what I now possess, and threatens to dispute it. In short, so sadly perplexed have I been under these circumstances, that I only saw one way to set the matter at rest, which was to marry again. Fate has thrown you in my way, and I am no longer at a loss.'

She then informed me of the arrangements she had made for our immediate union, in case I was not averse to it, and referred me to a man of the law, whom she had secured to act in her behalf, who would make out all the proper papers, and

whom she informed me was now in the house ready to officiate.

I was not prepared for quite so much despatch, and felt my heart misgive me, as if it were hovering between heaven and earth; but I did not hesitate to reiterate my protestations of eternal love and devotion, and said nothing to my intended but what seemed to overwhelm her with delight.

So impatient was she of any delay, that she immediately ordered the old Ayesha to conduct me to the man of the law, who was in attendance in a small apartment, in a more distant part of the house. Besides himself he had brought another, who, he informed me, would act as my *vakeel* or trustee, such an intervention being necessary on the part of the man as well as the woman; and then he exhibited before me the *akdnameh* or marriage deed, in which he had already inscribed the dower of my intended, consisting of her own property,

and demanded from me what additions it was my intention to make thereto.

I was again thrown back upon my ingenuity, and as the best answer I could give, repeated what I had before said to Ayesha, namely, that a merchant was uncertain of his wealth, which was dispersed in trade in different parts of the world; but I did not hesitate to settle all that I possessed upon my wife, provided such engagement were mutual.

'That is very liberal,' replied my wily scribe; 'but we require something more specific. As for instance, what do you possess here at Constantinople? You cannot have come thus far, except for important purposes. Settle the wealth which you can command upon the spot, be it in cash, merchandise, or houses, and that will suffice for the present.'

'Be it so,' said I, putting the best face possible upon the demand. 'Be it so—let us see.' Then appearing to calculate

within myself what I could command, I boldly said, 'You may insert that I give twenty purses in money, and ten in clothes.'

Upon this, a communication took place between the Emir's widow and her agent, for the purpose of informing her what were my proposals, and for gaining her consent to them. After some little negotiation, the whole was arranged to the apparent satisfaction of both parties, and our different seals having been affixed to the documents, and the necessary forms of speech having been pronounced by our different vakeels, the marriage was declared lawful, and I received the compliments of all present.

I did not fail to reward the scribes before they were dismissed, and also to send a very liberal donation to be distributed throughout the household of my fair bride.

Then instead of returning to old Osman, and my pillow of pipe-sticks, I retired, with all the dignity and consequence of the gravest Turk, into the inmost recesses of my harem.

CHAPTER XXII.

From a vender of pipe-sticks he becomes a rich Aga, but feels all the inconvenience of supporting a false character.

I soon found that I had a very difficult part to perform. A Chinese philosopher is said to have remarked, that if the operation of eating was confined to what takes place between the mouth and the palate, then nothing could be more pleasant, and one might eat for ever; but it is the stomach, the digestive organs, and, in fact, the rest of the body, which decide ultimately whether the said operation has been prejudicial or healthful. So it is in marriage. If it were confined to what takes place between man and wife, nothing more simple; but then come the ties of relationship and the interests of families, and

they decide much upon its happiness or misery.

My fair spouse entertained me for several successive days after our marriage with such manifold and intricate stories of her family, of their quarrels and their makings-up, of their jealousies and their hatreds, and particularly of their interested motives in their conduct towards her, that she made me feel as if I might have got into a nest of scorpions. She recommended that we should use the greatest circumspection in the manner of informing her brothers of our marriage; and remarked that although we were so far secure in being lawful man and wife, still as much of our future happiness depended upon their goodwill towards us, (they being men of wealth, and consequently of influence in the city) we ought to do every thing in our power to conciliate them. As a precautionary measure, she had spread a report that she was on the point of being married to one of the richest and

most respectable of the Bagdad merchants, and in a conversation with one of her brothers, had not denied, although she had abstained from confessing it to be the case. She now requested that our marriage might be proclaimed, and to that effect recommended that we should give an entertaiment to all her relations, and that no expense should be spared in making it as magnificent as possible, in order that they might be convinced she had not thrown herself away upon an adventurer, but, in fact, had made an alliance worthy of them and of herself.

She found me ready in seconding her wishes, and I was delighted to have so early an opportunity to make a display of our wealth. I began by hiring a suite of servants, each of whom had their appropriate situation and title. I exchanged the deceased emir's family of pipes for others of greater value, and of the newest fashion. In the same manner I provided myself with a new set of coffee-cups, the saucers of

which were fashioned in the most expensive manner; some of filigreed gold, others of enamel, and one or two, for my own particular use, inlaid with precious stones. Then, as I had stepped into the emir's shoes, I determined to slip on his pelisses also. He was curious in the luxuries of dress, for his wardrobe consisted of robes and furs of great value, which his widow informed me had existed in his family for many years, and which I did not now blush to adjust to my own shoulders. In short, before the day of the entertainment came, I had time to set up an establishment worthy of a great Aga; and I do believe, although born a barber, yet in look, manner, and deportment, no one could have acted a part truer to my new character than I did.

But I must not omit to mention, that previously to the feast, I had not failed to visit my new relations in all due form; and although I was greatly anxious respecting

the result of our meeting, yet when I rode through the streets mounted on one of the emir's fat horses, caparisoned in velvet housings that swept the ground, and surrounded by a crowd of well-dressed servants, my delight and exultation exceeded any feeling that I had ever before experienced. To see the crowd make way, look up, and lay their hands on their breast as I passed,—to feel and hear the fretting and champing of my horse's bit as he moved under me, apparently proud of the burthen he bore,—to enjoy the luxury of a soft and easy seat, whilst others were on foot,—in fine, to revel in those feelings of consequence and consideration which my appearance procured, and not to have been intoxicated, was more than mere humanity could withstand, and accordingly I was completely beside myself. But what added most to the zest of this my first exhibition, was meeting some of my own needy countrymen in the streets, who had been my companions

in the caravan from Bagdad, and who, in their sheepskin caps and thin scanty cotton garments, made but a sorry figure among the gaily dressed Osmanlies, and seemed to stand forth expressly to make me relish in the highest degree the good fortune with which I had been visited. Whether or no they recognized me, I know not; but this I recollect, that I turned my head on one side as I passed, and buried my face as well as I could in the combined shade of my beard, great turban, and furred pelisse.

My visits succeeded better than I could have expected. Whatever might have been the motives of my wife's brothers, they behaved to me with marked civility, and indeed flattered me into the belief that I had conferred an honour on their family in taking their sister off their hands. Merchants as they were, their conversation turned principally upon trade, and I made my best endeavours to talk up to the character I had assumed, and convinced

them of the extent of my undertakings in commerce. But, at the same time, great was my circumspection not to commit myself; for when they began to question and cross-examine me upon the trade of Bagdad and Bassorah, the relations of those cities and of Arabia in general with India and China, and to propose joint concerns in their various articles and produce, I immediately reduced my speech to monosyllables, entrenched myself in general terms, and assented to proposals which led to nothing.

Having completed my visits, I felt that one duty was still left, which was, to make the good old Osman a partaker of my happiness, to inform him of my marriage, and to invite him to our ensuing entertainment. But, shall I own it? so much did I feel that I was acting a false part, and so fearful was I of being detected, that I dared not trust even him, taciturn as he naturally was, with my secret, and therefore

determined for the present to have no communication with him, or, in fact, with any of my countrymen, until I could feel myself so securely fixed in my new situation as to be fearless of being displaced.

CHAPTER XXIII.

His desire to excite envy lays the foundation of his disgrace. He quarrels with his wife.

The entertainment went off with the greatest success, and there was every reason to suppose that I fully succeeded in making my guests believe I was really the personage whom I pretended to be. I therefore began to feel secure in my new possessions, and gave myself up to enjoyment, associating with men of pleasure, dressing in the gayest attire, and, in short, keeping a house that was the talk and envy of the city. 'Tis true that I almost daily felt the inconvenience of being indebted to my wife for such good fortune; for, notwithstanding the previous assurances of the old Ayesha, I soon found that differences of opinion would arise on many other subjects besides the comparative delicacy of cream and

cheese tarts. 'Excellent man must that old emir have been,' frequently did I exclaim, 'who could go through life with only one subject of dispute with his wife! For my part, if there happens to be two sides to a question, we are sure to appropriate them one in opposition to the other.'

I had long promised to myself the enjoyment of one of the principal pleasures arising from my good fortune; I mean, the exhibition of myself in all my splendour before my countrymen in the caravanserai, and enjoying the astonishment which I should excite in the old Osman, my former master.

Now, that all was safe, as I fully hoped, I could no longer resist the temptation, and accordingly dressed myself in my best attire, mounted the finest horse in my stable, gathered my whole suit of servants about me, and in the very busiest hour of the day proceeded to the caravanserai, in which, on my first arrival at Constan-

tinople, I had appeared as a vender of pipe-sticks. Upon entering the gate, no one seemed to know me, but all were anxious to do me honour, hoping that in me they might find a purchaser of their merchandize. I inquired for Osman Aga, whilst my servants spread a beautiful Persian carpet for my seat, and at the same time offered me one of my most costly amber-headed chibouks to smoke. He came and seated himself, with all due respect, on the edge of my carpet, without recognizing me. I talked to him without reserve for some time, and remarked that he eyed me with looks of peculiar interest, when at length, unable to restrain himself any longer, he exclaimed, 'By the beard of the blessed Mohammed, you are either Hajjî Baba, or you are nobody!'

I laughed with all my heart at his exclamation, and when we had mutually explained, very soon related how I was situated, and to what profit I had turned

the fifty pieces of gold which he had lent me. His philosophic mind did not appear so much elated with my change of fortune as I had anticipated; but my countrymen, the Persians, as soon as they heard that under that large turban and that heavy pelisse was seated Hajjî Baba, the once vender of little wares like themselves, and that all that splendour and circumstance of horse, servants, and rich pipes, was attendant upon his person, their national feelings were awakened, and they could neither contain their envy nor their malevolence.

I now, too late, discovered the mistake I had committed in showing myself off in this manner, and would willingly have sneaked away without further triumph.

'What! is this Hajjî Baba?' said one, 'the son of the Ispahan barber? May his father's grave be polluted, and his mother abused!'

'Well acted, true child of Irân!' said another; 'you have done your utmost with

the Turk's beard, and may others do the same with yours!'

'Look at his great turban, and his large trowsers, and his long pipe,' said a third: 'his father never saw such things, not even in a dream!'

In this manner did my envious countrymen taunt me, until, asserting all my dignity, I rose from my seat, mounted my horse, and left the place amidst their scoffs and expressions of contempt.

My first sensation was that of indignation at them, my second of anger at myself.

'You have been rightly served,' said I to myself, 'by the soul of Kerbelai Hassan, the barber! What well-fed hound ever went among wolves without being torn to pieces? What fool of a townsman ever risked himself amongst the wild Arabs of the desert without being robbed and beaten? Perhaps Hajjî may one day become a wise man, but plentiful is the vexation he must

eat first! Of what use is a beard,' said I, taking mine into my hand, 'when an empty sconce is tied to the end of it? about as much as a handle is to a basket without dates. Great wisdom had the sage who declared that no man was ever pleased with the elevation of his fellow, except perhaps when he saw him dangling on a gibbet!'

In this manner did I soliloquize until I reached my house, where, having retired to the harem, I endeavoured to seek repose for the remainder of the day, in order to chew the cud of my bitter reflections. But I was mistaken; for, to add to my misery, Shekerleb, my wife, as if impelled by some wicked demon, demanded that I should immediately advance her the money inserted in the marriage settlement for clothes, and so worked upon me by her very unreasonable entreaties, that, involving her in the ill-humour in which I had continued against my own countrymen, I poured forth the current of my feelings in language and gestures the most violent.

Curses upon them and maledictions upon her came from my lips in horrid succession, until I, the once mild and patient Hajjî, had become more furious than a Mazanderan lion.

My wife at first was all astonishment, and as she drew herself up at the head of her slaves and handmaids, seconded by the old Ayesha, waited with impatient silence for an opportunity to speak. At length, when she had found utterance, her mouth appeared too small for the volume of words which flowed from it. Her volubility unloosed the tongue of Ayesha, and the old woman's those of all the other women, until there arose such a tempest of words and screams, all of which were directed against me, that I was nearly overwhelmed.

I would have resisted, but I found it impossible. It raged with such fury, that the room in which we all stood was not large enough to contain us. I was the first to seek shelter, and made a retreat from my harem amid the groans, the revilings, and

the clapping of hands of the beings within it, who, with my wife at their head, looked more like maniacs than those fair creatures, in paradise, promised by our Prophet to all true believers.

Tired, jaded, and distressed by my day's adventures, I retired into my own apartment, locked the door, and there, though surrounded by and master of every luxury that man can enjoy, I felt myself the most miserable of beings, detesting myself for my idiotical conduct in the present posture of my affairs, and full of evil forebodings for the future. The inconveniences of lying now stared me full in the face. I felt that I was caught in my own snare; for if I endeavoured to extricate myself from my present dilemma by telling more lies, it was evident that at the end I should not fail to be entirely entangled.

'Would to Heaven!' did I exclaim, 'that I had been fair and candid at first; for now I should be free as air, and my wife might have stormed until the day of judgment,

without being a single shift the better for it; but I am bound by writings, sealed and doubly sealed, and I must ever and shall stand before the world a liar both by word and deed.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

He is discovered to be an impostor, loses his wife, and the wide world is again before him.

I PASSED a feverish night, and did not fall asleep until the muezzins from the minarets had announced the break of day. Scarcely had an hour elapsed, ere I was awoke by an unusual stir, and then was informed by one of my servants that my wife's brothers, attended by several other persons, were in the house.

Involuntarily, upon hearing this I was seized with a trembling, which at first deprived me of all power of action, and the consequences of lying now spoke for themselves. Fifty horrors, one more hideous than the other, rose in my mind, and I began to feel a tingling in the soles of my feet, which the lapse of years had not been able to dispel, so impressive had been the lesson

received at Meshed. 'But, after all,' I reflected, 'Shekerleb is my wife, happen what may; and if I have pretended to be richer than is really the case, I have only done what thousands before me have done also.' I then turned to my servant, and said, 'In the name of the Prophet, let them come in,—and make ready the pipes and coffee.'

My bed was then rolled up and carried out of the room, and my visitors one after the other in silent procession walked in, and seated themselves on my divan. They consisted of my wife's two brothers, of her late father's brother, and his son, and of a stern looking man whom I had never before seen. These were seated; but besides a numerous train of servants followed, who stood in a row at the end of the room, amongst whom, standing foremost, were two ruffian like looking fellows armed with heavy canes, eyeing me as I thought with peculiar fierceness.

I endeavoured to appear as innocent and undisturbed as possible, and pretended the

greatest delight at seeing them. Having made them every civil speech which I could devise, to which indeed I received nothing but monosyllables for answers, I ordered pipes and coffee, at the partaking of which I hoped to acquire some insight into the object of their visit.

'May your hours be fortunate!' said I to the elder brother. 'Is there any thing at this early time of the day in which I can be of use? If there is, command me.'

'Hajjî,' said he, after an ominous pause, 'look at me! Do you take us for animals, without understanding, without common sense? or do you look upon yourself as the man of his day without compare, specially privileged to take the beards of humankind into your hand, and to do what you like with them?'

'What is this that you say?' I replied. 'O my Aga! I am nobody and nothing; I am less than an ounce of dust.'

'Man!' said the second brother, in a warmer tone of voice, 'nobody and nothing,

do you say? then what have you made of us? Are we nothing, that you should come all this distance from Bagdad to make us dance like apes at your bidding?'

'Oh Allah, great and good!' exclaimed I, 'what is all this? Why do you speak after this manner? What have I done?—Speak, and speak truth!'

'Ah, Hajjî, Hajjî!' said my wife's uncle, shaking his head and grey beard at the same time, 'you have been eating much abomination! Could a man who has seen the world like you, suppose that others will eat it with you, and say, Thanks be to Allah! No, no—we may eat, but will not digest your insolence.'

'But what have I done, O my uncle?' said I to him; 'by my soul, speak!'

'What have you done?' said my wife's cousin: 'Is lying nothing? is stealing nothing? is marrying a wife under false pretences nothing? You must be a rare man without shame to call such acts nothing!'

'Perhaps,' said the eldest brother, 'you

think it a great honour which the son of an Ispahan barber confers upon one of the richest families of Constantinople, when he marries their daughter!'

'And perhaps,' said the other, 'you may look upon a beggarly vender of pipe-sticks in the light of a merchant, and think him worthy of any alliance!'

'But Hajjî, praise be to Allah! is a great merchant,' said the uncle ironically: 'his silks and velvets are now on their way to bring us lambskins from Bokhara; his shawls are travelling to us from Cashmere, and his ships are blackening the surface of the seas between China and Basorah!'

'And his parentage,' continued his son in the same strain, 'a barber's son did you say? forbid it Allah! No, no; he dates from the Koreish. He is not even the descendant, but, by the blessing of God, of the ancestry of the Prophet; and who can come in competition with a Mansouri Arab?

'What is all this?' again and again did I exclaim, as I saw the storm gathering about

my ears. 'If you want to kill me, do so; but do not pull off my skin by inches.'

'I tell you what it is, man without faith,' said the stern man, who hitherto had remained immovable; 'you are a wretch who deserves not to live! and if you do not immediately give up all pretensions to your wife, and leave this house and every thing that belongs to it, without a moment's delay, do you see those men (pointing to the two ruffians before mentioned); they will just make your soul take leave of your body as easy as they would knock the tobacco out of their pipes. I have spoken, and you are master to act as you please.'

Then the whole of the assembly, as if excited by this speech, unloosed their tongues at once, and, without reserve of words or action, told me a great number of disagreeable truths.

This storm, which I permitted to rage without opening my lips, gave me time for reflection, and I determined to try what a little resistance would do.

'And who are you,' said I to the stern man, 'who dares come into my house, and treat me as your dog? As for these,' pointing to my wife's relations, 'the house is theirs, and they are welcome; but you, who are neither her father, her brother, nor her uncle, what have you to do here? I neither married your daughter, nor your sister, and therefore what can it be to you who I am?'

All this while he seemed swelling with rage. He and his ruffians were curling up their mustachios to the corners of their eyes, and eyeing me, as the lion does the hind, before he pounces upon it.

'Who am I?' said he with a voice of anger. 'If you want to know, ask those who brought me here. I and my men act from authority, which if you dispute, it will be the worse for you.'

'But,' said I, softening my tone, for I now found that they were officers of the police, 'but if you insist upon separating me from my wife, to whom I have been

lawfully married, give me time to consult the men of the law. Every son of Islâm has the blessed Koran as his refuge, and ye would not be such infidels as to deprive me of that? Besides, I have not been told yet that she agrees to what you propose. She first sought me out; I did not seek her. She wooed me for my own sake, not for any worldly interest; and when I accepted her I knew her not, neither had I any tidings of either her wealth or her family. The whole has been the business of predestination, and if ye are Musulmans, will ye dare to oppose that?'

'As to the wishes of Sherkeleb upon the subject,' said the eldest brother, 'make your mind easy. She desires a separation more even than we do.'

'Yes, yes, in the name of the Prophet, yes, let him go in peace. For the sake of Allah, let us be free,' and fifty other such exclamations, all at once struck my ear; and on looking to the door which led into the women's apartments, from whence the

sound came, I beheld my women veiled, headed by my wife, who had been conducted there on purpose to give evidence against me, and who all seemed possessed by so many evil spirits, shouting and wailing out their lamentations and entreaties for my dismissal, as if I were the wicked one in person to be exorcised from the house.

Finding that all was over with me, that it was in vain to contend against a power I could not withstand, stranger and unprotected as I was in a foreign land, I put the best face I could upon my forlorn situation, and getting up from my seat, I exclaimed, 'If it is so, be it so. I neither want Shekerleb nor her money, nor her brothers, nor her uncle, nor any thing that belongs to them, since they do not want me; but this I will say, that they have treated me in a manner unworthy of the creed and name of Musulmans. Had I been a dog among the unbelievers, I should have been treated better. From the bottom of my heart I believe that the

same punishment which shall be inflicted, on the last day, upon those who reject our Holy Prophet, shall be inflicted upon my oppressors.' I then, with great emphasis, pronounced the following sentence against them, as near as my memory would serve me, from the blessed Koran: 'They shall have garments of living fire, fitted tight upon them; boiling water shall be poured over them; their bowels and skins shall be dissolved, and, in this state, they be beaten with red hot maces of iron, and flogged with whips, whose lashes are made of lightnings, and the noise of which shall be claps of thunder.'

Upon this, roused and excited as I was with the speech I had made, I stood in the middle of the room, and divested myself of every part of my dress which had belonged to my wife, or which I might have purchased with her money. Throwing down every article from me, as if it had been abomination, and then calling for an old

cloak which had originally belonged to me, I threw it over my shoulders and made my exit, denouncing a curse upon the staring assembly I left behind me.

CHAPTER XXV.

An incident in the street diverts his despair; he seeks consolation in the advice of old Osman.

When I had got into the street I walked hastily on, without, for some time, heeding whither I was bending my steps. My breast was convulsed by a thousand contending passions; and so nearly had I lost possession of my reason, that, when in sight of the sea, I began seriously to consider whether it would not be wisdom to throw myself headlong in.

But, crossing a large open space, an occurrence happened which, however trifling it may appear, was of great consequence to me, inasmuch as it turned the current of my thoughts into a new channel, and saved me from destruction. I was witness to one of those dog fights so frequently seen in

the streets of Constantinople. A dog had strayed into the territory of another community, had infringed their rights, and stolen a bone. Immediately an immense uproar ensued; all were on foot, and in full cry, and the strange dog was chased across the border into his own territory. Here, meeting some of his own friends, he called them about him, returned to the attack, and a general engagement ensued as I was passing.

While I stood by, intent upon the scene, a thought struck me, and I exclaimed, 'Allah, oh Allah, how inscrutable are thy designs! and how little ought man, narrow-minded, short-sighted man, ever to repine at thy decrees! Thou throwest into my path a lesson, which teaches me the way that I should go, and that assistance is ever at hand to those who will seek it; and, though given by a dog, let me not despise it. No, am I to be surprised at any thing, when I see animals, without reason, acting like men, with it? Let me not be cast down,

but rather retreat to where I may still find a friend, and seek consolation in his advice and experience!'

Upon this, I turned almost mechanically to where I knew I should find my faithful friend and adviser, the old Osman, who, although a Turk and a Sûni, had always behaved to me as if he had been my countryman, and one of my own religious persuasion. He received me in his usual quiet manner; and when I had related all my misfortunes, he puffed out a long volume of smoke from his never-failing chibouk, and exclaimed, with a deep sigh, '*Allah kerim!*' (God is merciful!)

'My friend,' said he, 'when you appeared here in all your magnificence before the Persians, from that moment I was apprehensive that some evil would befall you. You perhaps are yet not old enough to have learnt how odious are comparisons. Could you for a moment suppose, that men, in your own station in life, who are drudging on, day after day, intent upon

the sale of a pipestick or a bag of Shiraz tobacco, that they could bear to be bearded by an appearance of greatness and prosperity, so much beyond any thing which they could ever expect to attain? Had you appeared with a better coat or a richer cap than they, or had you been mounted on a horse, when they could only afford an ass, then, perhaps, nothing more would have been said, but that you were more expert in making your fortune, and a better retailer of your wares. But to crush, to beat them down, with your magnificent dress, your amber-headed pipes, your train of servants, your richly caparisoned horse, and, above all, the airs of grandeur and protection which you took upon yourself, was more than they could allow, and they immediately rose in hostility, and determined to bring you down to their own level again, if possible. Evidently, it is they who have whispered into the ear of your wife's brothers that you were not a Bagdad merchant, but only the son of an Ispahan barber,

and a sorry vender of little wares. They, doubtless, soon undeceived them respecting the possibility of fulfilling the stipulations to which you have bound yourself in your wife's marriage contract; and they, it is plain, have commented freely upon your pretensions to noble birth, and upon the flourishing account which you gave of your mercantile concerns, of your transactions in Bokhara, and of your ships sailing to China. Had you first visited me in a quiet way, as Hajjî Baba, the Ispahani, and not as Hajjî Baba, the Turkish Aga, I would have warned you against making an undue exhibition of yourself and your prosperity before your countrymen; but the mischief was done as soon as the deed was over, and now all that can be recommended is, that from the past you gain experience for the future.' After this speech he took to his pipe again, and puffed away with redoubled vigour.

'This may be very true,' said I. 'What is done, is done, and peace abide with it:

but, after all, I am a Musulman, and justice is due to me as well as to another. I never heard of a woman putting away her husband, although the contrary frequently happens; and it has not yet reached my understanding why I should be the only true believer who is called into the house, and thrust out of it again, in a manner that would even disgrace a dog, merely because it suits a capricious woman one morning to like, and the evening after to dislike, me. Cadies, mufties, sheikh-el-islams, abound here as well as in other Mohamedan cities, and why should I not have recourse to them? They are paid to administer justice, and wherefore should they sit, with their hands across, counting their beads, when such injustice as that, with which I have been visited, is going about the land seeking for redress?'

'Are you mad, Hajjî,' rejoined the old man, 'to think of redress from the widow and relations of one of the most powerful emirs of Islam, and that, too, when she is

supported by her brothers, two of the richest merchants in Constantinople?—Where have you lived all your lifetime, not to know, that he who hath most gold hath most justice? and that, if such a man as you were to appear before the tribunal of the mufti, with every word, line, leaf, and surai of the Koran in your favour, and one as rich and powerful as your wife's brother were to appear on the other side against you, as long as he had gold in his favour, you might appeal to your sacred book until you and it were tired of walking round each other, for justice you would never obtain.'

'O, Ali! O, Mohamed!' exclaimed I, 'if the world is indeed as iniquitous as this, then Hajjî Baba, truly, has made a bad bargain, and I wish he were again in possession of his pipesticks: but I cannot, and will not, lose all and every thing in this easy manner,—I will go and proclaim my misfortunes from the housetop, rather.'

Upon which, in utter despair, I began to

cry and moan, and pulled out some of my beard by the roots.

Osman Aga endeavoured to comfort me,—made me look back upon my past life, and brought to my recollection our mutual adventures while prisoners among the Turcomans.

'God is all-powerful and all-merciful,' said he. 'Our destinies are written in the book, and therefore what is there left, but to submit?'

'But I am a Persian,' exclaimed I, (a new thought having crossed my mind), 'as well as a Musulman; why, therefore, should I submit to injustice from a Turk?—We are, after all, a nation, and have had our Jinghizs, our Timours, and our Nadirs, who made our name respected throughout the world, and who burnt the fathers of the Turks wherever they could find them. I will seek our ambassador, and, if he be a man, he will insist upon justice being done me. Yes, yes! the ambassador shall get back my wife; (oh, lucky thought!) and

then we shall see who will take her from me again.'

So elated was I by this idea, that I did not stop to hear what Osman might have to say on the subject, but immediately sallied forth, full of fresh spirits and vigour, to seek out the representative of our King of Kings, who, at the best of all fortunate hours, had very recently arrived on a mission to the Sublime Porte.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In endeavouring to gain satisfaction from his enemies he acquires a friend. Some account of Mirza Firouz.

Upon inquiry I found that the ambassador had been provided with a residence at Scutari, and thither I immediately bent my course, happy to have the time which I should pass in the boat at my disposal, in order to arrange my ideas for the purpose of making out a clear and strong case of complaint.

Having landed, I inquired the way to his house, the avenues of which were thronged by his numerous servants, who reminded me of my country, (so different from that in which we were), by their loquaciousness and quick gesticulation.

They soon found by my discourse, that I was one of them, although disguised by a

Turkish dress, and without any difficulty I was promised immediately to be ushered into the presence of their master. But previously to this, I was anxious to acquire some little insight into his character, in order that I might shape my discourse accordingly; and therefore entered into conversation with one of his valets, who did not scruple to talk fully and unreservedly upon every topic upon which I required information.

The result of my inquiries was as follows:—The ambassador, by name Mirza Firouz, was by birth a Shirazi, of respectable though not of high parentage, excepting in the instance of his mother, who was sister to a former grand vizier of great power, who, in fact, had been the means of placing the Shah upon his throne. The mirza married his cousin, a daughter of the said vizier; and this led to his being employed in the government, though he had previously undergone many vicissitudes, which had caused him to travel into various countries. This circumstance, however, was

one of the reasons of his being selected by the Shah to transact his business at foreign courts. 'He is a man of a quick and penetrating mind,' said my informant: 'irascible, but easy to soothe, of a tender and forgiving nature, although in his first anger led to commit acts of violence. He is gifted with the most overwhelming powers of speech, which always are sure to get him out of the scrapes into which his indiscreet use of them very frequently leads him. To his servants and followers he is kind and the contrary, by turns. Sometimes he permits them to do and say every thing which they choose, at others, he keeps them at a most chilling distance. But, on the whole, he is easy of access, of agreeable commerce, of most fascinating manners, and of a joyous and sociable nature.'

Such was the man into whose presence I was conducted. He was seated in a corner, after the manner of Persia; therefore I could not ascertain what his height might be, but his bust was extremely fine. His head

was symmetrically placed on his shoulders, which were blended in an easy curve with his neck; whilst his tight dress helped to give great breadth to his breast. His face was one of the handsomest I had ever seen amongst my countrymen, his nose aquiline, his eyes large and sparkling, his teeth and mouth exquisite, and his beard the envy of all beholders. In short, as a specimen of the country he represented, none could have been better selected.

When we had interchanged our greetings as true believers, he said to me, 'Are you an Irani?'

'Yes,' said I, 'so please you.'

'Then why in looks an Osmanli?' said he. 'Praise be to Allah, that we have a king and a country of whom no one need be ashamed.'

'Yes,' answered I, 'your ordonnances are truth, and I am become less than a dog, since I have put on the airs of a Turk. My days have been passed in bitterness, and my liver has melted into water, since I

have entangled myself by a connexion with this hated people; and my only refuge is in God and you.'

'How is this?' said he: 'speak.—Has a child of Ispahan (for such you are by your accent) been taken in by a Turk? This is wonderful indeed! We travel all this way to make them feed upon our abomination, not to learn to eat theirs.'

I then related the whole of my adventures from the beginning to the end. As I proceeded he seemed wonderfully interested. When I got to my marriage he became much amused, and roared with laughter at the settlements I had made on my wife. The account I gave of the entertainment, the respect with which I was treated, my magnificence and grandeur, afforded him great delight; and the more I descanted upon the deception which I had practised upon the cows of Turks, as he called them, the more interest he took in my narrative, which he constantly interrupted by his exclamations, 'Ay, well

done, oh Ispahani!—Oh! thou bankrupt!—By Allah! You did well!—If I had been there, I could not have done better.'

But when I informed him of the manner I had been served by my envious countrymen, of the finishing scene in my own house, of the screams of my women, of the speeches of my wife's relations,—and when I represented the very words, look, and attitude with which I made my exit, far from having produced the sympathy I expected, his mirth was excited to such a degree, that I thought the veins in his forehead would have burst; and he actually rolled himself on his sofa in the convulsions of laughter.

'But, may it please you to consider,' said I, 'oh my Aga! the situation in which I am now placed. Instead of the bed of roses upon which I slept, I have not even a pillow whereon to lay my head. As for the horses and velvet which I used to bestride, happy should I now be could I claim even an ass for my own. And when

I call to mind the luxuries in which I revelled, my rich dresses, my splendid horses, my train of servants, my marble baths, my pipes, my coffee-cups—in short, what shall I say, my every thing a man could wish for, and now find myself a beggar—conceive the bitter recollections which prey upon me, and which excite any thing but laughter in my breast, whatever they may do in yours.'

'But those Turks, those heavy buffaloes of Turks,' roared he, still screaming with laughter; 'praise be to Allah! I can see them now with their long beards, their great caps, and their empty heads, believing all that the sharp-witted madman of Persia chose to tell them, and they would have gone on believing, had they not been undeceived by a similar species of madman.'

'But what have I to do in the business?' said he to me. 'I am neither your father nor your uncle, to interfere and make it up with your wife's relations; nor am I a

cadi, or a mufti, who can judge the case between you.'

'No,' answered I; 'but you are my refuge here, and the representative of God's vicegerent upon earth; and you can see justice done me, and not let a poor unfriended stranger be oppressed.'

'But would you get back possession of your wife,' said he, 'and stand a chance of being murdered? Of what good would all your riches be, if the day after repossessing them you were found dead in your bed? No, no; lend me your ear, and hearken to good council. Throw off your Turkish clothes, and be a Persian again; and when in your proper character, I will keep you in mind, and see what may be done for you. Your story has interested me, your wit and manner are agreeable, and believe me that many better things are to be done in the world than to smoke a long pipe all day, with no other object in life than to sleep upon a bed of roses, and to ride a fat horse. In the meanwhile,

take up your quarters here; look upon yourself as one of my suite for the present, and whenever I wish to be merry you shall come and relate your story over again.'

Upon this I went up to him, kissed his knee in token of acknowledgment, and retired, scarcely knowing what steps to take in this unsettled posture of my affairs.

CHAPTER XXVII.

He becomes useful to an ambassador, who makes him a partaker of his confidence.

'Necessity,' so the poet sayeth, 'is as a strong rider with sharp stirrups, who maketh the sorry jade do that which the strong horse sometimes will not do.'

I was disappointed, vexed, and mortified. My hopes of living a life of ease and enjoyment had disappeared, and I once more saw myself obliged to have recourse to my own ingenuity to keep me from starvation.

'If I have lost a home,' said I, 'see I have found a friend. Let me not reject his proffered protection; and the same powerful destiny which has led me on step by step through the labyrinth of life will doubtless again take me by the hand, and perhaps at length safely land me where I

shall no longer be perplexed respecting the path I ought to pursue.'

I determined to make the most of my access to the ambassador; and happy was I to find, that the liking which he had taken to me at first sensibly, though gradually, increased during our succeeding interviews. He made use of me to acquire information, and conversed freely upon the business of his government, and upon matters connected with his mission.

Having all my life been taken up in making my own fortune, I had turned my mind but little to public events. Of the nations of the world I scarcely knew any but my own and the Turks. By name only the Chinese, the Indians, the Affghans, the Tatars, the Cûrds, and the Arabs were known to me; and of the Africans I had some knowledge, having seen different specimens of them as slaves in our houses. Of the Franks,—the Russians (if such they may be called) were those of whom we had the most knowledge in

Persia, and I had also heard of the Ingliz and the Franciz. When I reached Constantinople, I was surprised to hear that many more Frank nations existed besides the three above mentioned; but still, occupied with my own affairs, I acquired but little knowledge concerning them.

Now that I was thrown into the ambassador's society, my ideas took a new turn, and hearing matters discussed which had never even reached my understanding, I became more inquisitive. He seemed pleased to have found in me one who took interest in his views, and at length let me entirely into his confidence.

One morning, having received letters from his court, he called me to him, said that he wished for some private conversation, and accordingly ordered every one to depart from before him except myself.

He made me sit, and then in a low voice said, 'Hajjî, I have long wished to speak to you. Those who compose my suite, between you and I, do not possess the

sort of understanding I require. 'Tis true, they are Persians, and are endowed with more wit than all the world beside; but in affairs of the *dowlet* (the state), they are nothing, and rather impede than forward the business upon which I have been sent. Now, praise be to Allah! I see that you are not one of them. You are much of a man, one who has seen the world and its business, and something may come from out of your hands. You are a man who can make play under another's beard, and suck the marrow out of an affair without touching its outside. Such I am in want of, and if you will devote yourself to me, and to our Shah, the King of Kings, both my face as well as your own will be duly whitewashed; and, by the blessings of our good destinies, both our heads will touch the skies.'

'Whatever is of my strength,' replied I, 'is at your service. I am your slave and your servant, and I myself will place my own ear into your hand. Order and

command me: by my head and eyes, I am ready.'

'Perhaps you have heard it reported in the world,' said he, 'that the object of my mission is to buy women slaves for the Shah, to see them instructed in dancing, music, and embroidery, and to purchase spangled silks and other luxuries for the royal harem; but that is of course a blind for the multitude. I am not an ambassador for such miserable purposes: no, my business is of greater import; and our king, whose penetration is as searching as lightning itself, does not select men to transact his affairs without very substantial reasons. He has chosen me, and that's enough. Now hearken to what I shall tell you.

'But a few months ago an ambassador from Europe arrived at the Gate of Empire, Tehran, and said he was sent by a certain Boonapoort, calling himself Emperor of the French nation, to bring a letter and presents to the Shah. He exhibited full powers, by which his words

were to be looked upon as his master's, and his actions as his actions; and he also affirmed, that he had full instructions to make a treaty. He held himself very high indeed, and talked of all other nations of Franks as dirt under his feet, and not worth even a name. He promised to make the Russians restore their conquests in Georgia to us, to put the Shah in possession of Teflis, Baadkoo, Derbent, and of all which belonged to Persia in former times. He said, that he would conquer India for us, and drive the English from it; and, in short, whatever we asked he promised to be ready to grant.

'Now, 'tis true, we had heard of the French before, and knew that they made good cloth and rich brocades; but we never heard that they could do all this ambassador proclaimed.

'Something we had heard also of their attacking Egypt, for coffee and khenna had become dear in consequence; and it

was in the recollection of one of our old khans of the Seffi family, that an ambassador from a certain Shah Louis of France had been seen at the court of Shah Sultan Hosein; but how this Boonapoort had become Shah, not a single man in Persia could explain. The Armenian merchants, who travel into all countries, affirmed, that to their knowledge such a person in fact did exist, and that he was a great breeder of disturbance; and it was from what they said and from other circumstances, that the Shah agreed to receive his ambassador; but whether the papers which he exhibited, written in characters that no one could read, were true or false, or whether all he said was to the purpose or not, who was to say? Our viziers, great and small, knew nothing of the matter; our Shah, who, (may Allah preserve him!) knows every thing under the sun, he had no knowledge of it; and excepting one Coja Obed, an Armenian, who had been to Marsilia, a

town in France, where he had been shut up in a prison for forty days*, and one Narses, a priest of that nation, who had studied in a convent of dervishes somewhere in those countries, we had no one at the gate of the King of Kings who could let any light into the chambers of our brain, or who could in the least explain whether this Boonapoort or his representative were impostors or not,—whether they were come to take our caps from off our heads, or to clothe us with the kalaats of good fortune.

'However, we were not very long in doubt; for when the English infidels who trade between India and Persia, some of whom reside at Abusheher, heard of the arrival of this ambassador, they immediately sent off messengers, letters, and an agent, to endeavour to impede the reception of this Frenchman, and made such extraordinary efforts to prevent his success, that we soon discovered much was to be got between the rival dogs.

* Quarantine, we presume, is here meant.

"'By my crown,' exclaimed the Shah, 'all this cometh from the ascendant of my good stars. Here sit I upon my throne, whilst the curs of uncleanness come from the north and the south, from the east and west, bringing me vast presents for the liberty of fighting and quarreling at the foot of it. In the name of the Prophet, let them approach!'

'When I left the imperial gate, an ambassador from the English was expected, and the letters which I have just received are full of the circumstances of his proposed reception, and the negotiations on foot concerning it,—but the Shah cannot well enter upon them before he hears from me; because, having been informed that specimens of all the different European nations were to be seen at Constantinople, each of whom had an ambassador there, he, in his wisdom, has judged it expedient to despatch me hither, to obtain all the information of which we are so much in want, to clear up every doubt that exists in Persia

about the French and English, and if possible to find out whether all they say of themselves be true or false.

'Now, Hajjî,' said the ambassador, 'I am only one man, and this is a business, as I have found out, sufficient for fifty. The Franks are composed of many, many nations. As fast as I hear of one hog, another begins to grunt, and then another and another, until I find that there is a whole herd of them. As I told you before, those who compose my suite are not men to help me in research, and I have cast my eyes upon you. From your exertions I expect much. You must become acquainted with some infidels; you understand the Turkish language, and they will be able to inform you of much that we want to know. I will furnish you with a copy of the Shah's instructions to me upon that head, which you will lock up of course in the secret corners of your brain, and which will be your guide upon what we wish to acquire. And until that be done, go, sit in a corner,

and make one long and deep thought upon the plan of operations that we ought to pursue.'

Upon this he dismissed me, and I left him with new prospects of advancement in the career of life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of his first essays in public life, and of the use he was of to his employer.

As soon as the ambassador had furnished me with an extract of his *vakayeh nameh*, or his instructions, I walked out to an adjacent cemetery to read it over undisturbed. I kept the paper carefully folded in the lining of my cap, and as it was my first initiation into public business, the principal contents of it have remained in my memory through life.

The ambassador was, in the first place, enjoined to discover, in truth, what was the extent of that country called Frangistan; and if the Shah, known in Persia by the name of the *Shahi Frank*, or king of the Franks, actually existed, and which was his capital.

In the second place, he was ordered to discover how many *Ils*, or tribes of Franks,

there were; whether they were divided into *Shehernisheens* and *Sahranisheens*, inhabitants of towns and dwellers in the desert, as in Persia, who were their khans, and how governed.

Thirdly, to inquire what was the extent of France, whether it was a tribe of the Franks, or a separate kingdom, and who was the infidel Boonapoort, calling himself emperor of that country.

In the fourth place, his attention was to be turned particularly to what regarded the Ingliz, who had long been known in Persia, by means of their broad-cloth, watches, and penknives. He was to inquire what description of infidels they were, whether they lived in an island all the year round, without possessing any *kishlak* (warm region) to migrate to in the summer, and whether most of them did not inhabit ships and eat fish; and if they did live there, how it happened that they had obtained possession of India; and he was to clear up that question so long agitated in Persia,

how England and London were connected, whether England was part of London, or London part of England?

In the fifth place, he was commanded to bring positive intelligence of who and what the *Coompani* was, of whom so much was said,—how connected with England,—whether an old woman, as sometimes reported, or whether it consisted of many old women; and whether the account which was credited of its never dying, like the lama of Thibet, were not a fable. He was also enjoined to clear up certain unintelligible accounts of the manner in which England was governed.

In the sixth place, some positive information concerning *Yengi duniah*, or the New World, was much wanted, and he was to devote part of his attention to that subject.

Lastly, he was ordered to write a general history of the Franks, and to inquire what would be the easiest method of making them renounce pork and wine, and con-

verting them to the true and holy faith, that is, to the religion of Islâm.

Having well pondered over this paper, I considered that it would be easy to get it answered through the means of a *katib*, or scribe, attached to the then Reis Effendi, and with whom, during the short gleam of splendour and riches which had shone upon me, I had formed a great intimacy. I knew the coffee-house he frequented, and the hour when he was most likely to be found there; and although he was not much addicted to talking, yet I hoped, as he sipped his coffee and smoked his pipe, (particularly if I treated him) his heart might expand, and I might obtain his real opinion.

Full of this idea, I immediately imparted it to the ambassador, who seemed so delighted, that he at once did me the honour to take all the merit of it to himself.

'Did not I tell you so?' exclaimed he; 'did I not say that you were a man of ingenuity? Acknowledge, then, that I am not

without penetration; own, that it requires a sharp discernment to discover at once where abilities lie; and that had it not been for me, we should never have discovered this katib, who is to tell us every thing, and thus fulfil the instructions of the Asylum of the Universe.'

He then empowered me, if I found it necessary, to promise him a present, by which means, should there be any deficiency in his information, he might perhaps succeed in obtaining it from the fountain head, namely, the Reis Effendi himself.

I went to the coffee-house at the proper time, and there found my friend. I approached him with great demonstrations of friendship; and calling to the waiting man, ordered some best Yemen coffee, which was served up as we sat one opposite the other. In the course of conversation he pulled out his watch, when I seized the opportunity of introducing my subject.

'That is an European watch,' said I, 'is it not?'

'Yes, truly,' said he; 'there are none in the world beside.'

'Wonderful,' answered I,—'those Franks must be an extraordinary people.'

'Yes,' said he, 'but they are Kafirs,' (infidels).

'In the name of Allah,' taking my pipe from my mouth and putting it into his, 'tell me something respecting them. This Frangistan, is it a large country? Where does its king reside?'

'What say you, friend?' answered he; 'a large country, do you ask? A large country indeed it is, not governed by one king alone, but by many kings.'

'But I have heard,' said I, 'it is composed of many tribes, all having different names and different chiefs; still being, in fact, but one nation.'

'You may call them one nation if you choose,' said he, 'and perhaps such is the case, for they all shave their chins, let their hair grow, and wear hats,—they all wear tight clothes,—they all drink wine, eat pork,

and do not believe in the blessed Mahomed. But it is plain they are governed by many kings; see the numerous ambassadors who flock here to rub their foreheads against the threshold of our Imperial Gate. So many of these dogs are here, that it is necessary to put one's trust in the mercies of Allah, such is the pollution they create.'

'In the name of the Prophet speak on,' said I, 'and I will write.—Praise be to Allah! you are a man of wisdom.' Upon which, whilst I took out my inkstand from my girdle, and composed myself to write, he stroked his beard, and curled the tips of his mustachios, recollecting within himself which were the principal nations of Europe.

He prefaced his information by saying, 'But why trouble yourself? They all are dogs alike,—all sprung from one dunghill; and if there be truth in Heaven, and we believe our blessed Koran, all will burn hereafter in one common furnace. But, stop,' said he, counting his fingers: 'in the first place, there is the *Nemsé Giaour*,

the Austrian infidel, our neighbours; a quiet, smoking race, who send us cloth, steel, and glassware; and are governed by a Shah, springing from the most ancient race of unbelievers: he sends us a representative to be fed and clothed.

'Then come those heretics of Muscovites, a most unclean and accursed generation. Their country is so large, that one extremity is said to be buried in eternal snows, whilst its other is raging with heat. They are truly our enemy; and when we kill them, we cry Mashallah, praise be to God! Men and women govern there by turns; but they resemble us inasmuch as they put their Sovereigns to death almost as frequently as we do.

'Again, there is a Prussian infidel, who sends us an ambassador, Allah only knows why; for we are in no need of such vermin: but, you well know, that the Imperial Gate is open to the dog as well as the true believer; for the rain of Providence descends equally upon both.

'Who shall I say next, in the name of the Prophet? Let us see: there are two northern unbelievers, living at the extremity of all things,—the Danes and Swedes. They are small tribes, scarcely to be accounted among men, although it is said the Shah of Denmark is the most despotic of the kings of Franks, not having even janissaries to dispute his will; whilst the Swedes are famous for a madman, who once waged a desperate war in Europe; caring little in what country he fought, provided only that he did fight; and who, in one of his acts of desperation, made his way into our borders, where, like a wild beast, he was at length brought to bay, and taken prisoner. Owing to this circumstance we were introduced to the knowledge of his nation; or otherwise, by the blessing of Allah, we should never have known that it even existed.

'I will mention one more, called Flemengs, infidels, dull, heavy, and boorish; who are amongst the Franks what the Armenians are amongst us,—having no ideas beyond those

of thrift, and no ambition beyond that of riches. They used to send us a sleepy ambassador to negotiate the introduction of their cheeses, butter, and salt-fish; but their government has been destroyed since the appearance of a certain Boonapoort, who (let them and the patron of all unbelief have their due) is in truth a man; one whom we need not be ashamed to class with the Persian Nadir, and with our own Suleiman.'

Here I stopped the Katib in his narrative, and catching at the name, I exclaimed, 'Boonapoort, Boonapoort,—that is the word I wanted! Say something concerning him; for I have heard he is a rare and a daring infidel.'

'What can I say,' said my companion, 'except that he once was a man of nothing, a mere soldier; and now he is the Sultan of an immense nation, and gives the law to all the Franks? He did his best endeavours to molest us also, by taking Egypt, and sent innumerable armies to conquer it; but he had omitted to try the edge of a true be-

liever's sword ere he set out, and was obliged to retreat, after having frightened a few Mamalukes, and driven the Bedouins into their deserts.'

'But is there not a certain tribe of infidels called Ingliz?' said I, 'the most unaccountable people on earth, who live in an island, and make pen-knives?'

'Yes, truly,' said the Katib, 'they, amongst the Franks, are those who for centuries have most rubbed their heads against the imperial threshold, and who have found most favour in the sight of our great and magnanimous Sultan. They are powerful in ships; and in watches and broadcloth unrivalled.'

'But what have you heard of their government?' said I: 'is it not composed of something besides a king?'

'Yes,' returned he, 'you have been rightly informed; but how can you and I understand the humours of such madmen? They have a Shah, 'tis true; but it is a farce to call him by that title. They feed,

clothe, and lodge him; give him a yearly income, surround him by all the state and form of a throne; and mock him with as fine words and with as high-sounding titles as we give our sovereigns; but a common Aga of the Janissaries has more power than he; he does not dare even to give the bastinado to one of his own viziers, be his fault what it may; whereas the Aga, if expedient, would crop the ears of half the city, and still receive nothing but reward and encouragement.

'Then they have certain houses full of madmen, who meet half the year round for the purposes of quarrelling. If one set says white, the other cries black; and they throw more words away in settling a common question than would suffice one of our muftis, during a whole reign. In short, nothing can be settled in the state, be it only whether a rebellious Aga is to have his head cut off and his property confiscated, or some such trifle, until these people have wrangled. Then what are we to believe?

Allah, the Almighty and Allwise, to some nations giveth wisdom, and to others folly! Let us bless Him and our Prophet, that we are not born to eat the miseries of the poor English infidels, but can smoke our pipes in quiet on the shores of our own peaceful Bosphorus!'

'Strange, strange things, you tell me,' said I, 'and had I not heard them, I could not believe something more, which is, that all India belongs to them, and that it is governed by old women. Do you know that fact?'

'I shall not be surprised to hear of any thing they do,' answered he, 'so mad are they generally reported to be; but that India is governed by infidel old women, that has never yet reached our ears. Perhaps it is so. God knows,' continued he, musing, 'for mad people do wonderful things.'

After a pause, 'Now,' said I, 'have I learnt all, or are there more unbelievers?

By your beard, tell me; for who would have thought that the world was so composed?'

He reflected for some time, and said, 'O yes, I forgot to mention two or three nations; but, in truth, they are not worthy of notice. There are Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian infidels, who eat their swine, and worship their image after their own manner; but who, in fact, are nothing even amongst the Franks. The first is known to us by their *patakas* (dollars); the second sends us some Jews; and the third imports different sorts of dervishes, who pay considerable sums into the imperial treasury for building churches, and for the privilege of ringing bells. I must also mention the *papa* (pope), the Caliph of the Franks, who lives in Italia, and does not cease his endeavours to make converts to his faith; but we are more than even with him, for we convert the infidels in much greater proportion than they, notwithstand-

ing all the previous pain which man must suffer before he is accepted for a true believer.'

'One more question I must ask,' said I, 'and then I am satisfied. Can you tell me any thing positive about *Yengi duniah*, the New World; for I have heard so many contradictory reports, that my brain is bewildered? How do they get at it, underground, or how?'

'We have not had many dealings with it,' said the Katib, 'and therefore know not much of the matter; but this is true, that one can get there by ship, because ships belonging to the New World have actually been seen here. They are all infidels, my friend,' exclaimed he, with a sigh; 'all infidels, as much as those of the old world, and, by the blessing of Allah, will all grill in the same furnace.'

Finding that upon this subject the Katib was deficient, I ceased questioning; and our conversation having now lasted a long

time, I released him from further importunity, by calling for more coffee, and replenishing our pipes. We then separated, not without mutual promises of meeting again.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Hajjî Baba writes the History of Europe, and with his ambassador returns to Persia.

I returned to my ambassador full of the information I had acquired, and all-joyous at the success which had attended my first essay in diplomatic life. He was delighted at the memoir I had drawn up from the materials furnished me by the Katib, and as long as we remained at Constantinople daily sent me in search of further particulars, until we both thought ourselves sufficiently in force to be able to draw up a general History of Europe, which the Centre of the Universe in his instructions to the ambassador had ordered him to present on his return. Most assiduously did I apply myself in composing this precious morsel of history. I made a rough draught, which was submitted to the correction of my chief,

and when he had seasoned its contents to the palate of the King of Kings, softening down those parts which might appear improbable, and adding to those not sufficiently strong, he delivered it over to a clerk, who in a fair hand transcribed the whole, until at length a very handsome volume was produced. It was duly bound, ornamented, and inserted in a silk and muslin bag, and then the ambassador conceived it might be fit to be placed in the hands of the Shah.

Mirza Firouz having now, as he conceived, accomplished the objects of his mission, prepared to return, and announced his intention not only of taking me with him, but also of continuing me in the employ of the government, as soon as we should reach Tehran; 'for,' said he, 'a person so well acquainted with the interests of the Franks will be of great use in treating with the infidel ambassadors now in Persia.'

He could not have devised a plan better suited to my wishes; for after my cruel treatment by the Turks, I hated every

thing relating to them. Their city was become odious to me, and whenever I thought upon Shekerleb my heart swelled with rage. Much time had now elapsed since my affair with the chief priest of Tehran. The Mollah Nadan, so I had heard, had long ago been blown from the mouth of a mortar, and the widow, whom I left in the hands of the Cûrds, had never returned to Persia. Therefore I concluded I might show myself in all safety, for I argued thus: should I even be recognised, still who would venture to molest me, powerfully protected as I should be by men in office? The chief executioner had recovered possession of his horse and furniture, when the unfortunate Nadan had been seized; and there was every reason to suppose that Abdul Kerim had shared the fate of his mistress, the chief priest's widow, for he had no more been heard of; so I did not fear that he would call upon me to refund the hundred tomauns. What had I then to apprehend on returning to Tehran? Nothing that I could

foresee; and if once it were known that I was a servant of the Shah, even being a thousand times more criminal than I was in fact, I might put my cap on one side, and walk all over the empire with impunity.

Fortified by these reflections, I made my preparations with alacrity to accompany the ambassador. But previous to our departure, I determined upon visiting my countrymen in the caravanserai, where with a better chance of success I now might give myself those airs of importance which had succeeded so ill at my last exhibition. Having taken some trouble to make it well understood that I was attached to the embassy, I no longer dreaded their contempt; and such is the respect that one invested with that character is sure to inspire, that on this occasion I had no reason to complain of any want of attention. Every word addressed to me was now prefaced with, By your favour, By your condescension, May your kindness never be less; and compliments which never ended, interlarded all

the fine discourses I heard. To hear them, nobody could have ever supposed that I was the same person whom not two months before they had laughed to scorn: on the contrary, one ignorant of the circumstance would have set me down for a personage upon whom the issues of life and death depended. But when I took my leave of the old Osman, I found him unchanged, and every word he spoke showed that his affection for the son of the barber of Ispahan was the feeling which ever actuated his conduct towards me. 'Go, my son,' said he, as he parted from me, 'whether you be a prisoner with the Turcomans, or a priest, or a seller of pipe-sticks, or a Turkish Aga, or a Persian Mirza; be you what you may, I shall always put up my prayers for your prosperity, and may Allah attend your steps wherever you go.'

Having made his visits of ceremony, and taken his leave of the Turkish authorities, the ambassador left Scutari, accompanied by a large company of his own countrymen,

who conducted him about one parasang on the road to Persia, and then received their dismissal. Our journey was propitious, and nothing took place in it worthy of notice from the day of our departure until our arrival in Persia. At Erivan we heard the news of the day, though but imperfectly; but at Tabriz, the seat of Abbas Mirza's government, we were initiated into the various questions which then agitated the country and the court. The principal one was the rivalry between the French and English ambassadors; the object of the former, who had already been received by the Shah, being to keep away the latter, who had not yet reached the foot of the throne.

Various were the anecdotes related of the exertions made by them to attain their ends, and the whole of Persia was thrown into astonishment upon seeing infidels come so far from their own countries, at so much trouble and expense, to quarrel in the face of a whole nation of true believers, who were

sure to despise, to deride, and to take them in.

The Frenchman, by way of enforcing his demands, constantly brought forwards the power of his own sovereign, his greatness and preponderance over all the states of Europe, and did not cease to extol the immense numbers of troops he could bring into the field.

To this he was answered, 'That may be very true; but what is that to us? Whole empires intervene, and therefore what affinity can there be between France and Persia?'

'But,' said the Frenchman, 'we want to conquer India from the English, and we wish to have an open road through your territories.'

'What is that to us?' again said the Shah: 'you may want India, but we are in no way anxious to entertain your troops.'

'But we will conquer Georgia for you, put you in possession of Teflis, and secure

you from further molestation from the Russians.'

'That is another case,' said the Shah; 'when once we see the effects of your interference, and hear that there are no mor Rùssians on this side the Caucasus, we wi treat with you: until then we can allow n passage through our territories, nor brea with our old friends the English!'

On the other hand, the English saic 'The French can have no other object i coming to Persia than to molest us; we re quire that you send them away.'

'How!' said the Shah, 'we cannot d that; for that would be against the laws c hospitality. The gate of our palace is ope to every one.'

'But,' urged the English, 'you mus either retain one or the other—and mus decide between us. Either agree to be ou friends and expel the French, or make u your minds to receive us as enemies.'

'Why should we make ourselves ene

mies to please you? We want to be friends with all the world.'

'But,' continued the English, 'we will help and strengthen you, and give you money.'

'O! that is another case,' said the Shah; 'tell me how much, and then all may be done.'

Such was nearly the state of things when we left Tabriz, and as my ambassador was expected with impatience at Tehran, we did not tarry long with the prince royal, but prosecuted our journey with all despatch.

On the morning of our arrival at Sultanieh, on the road from Tehran, we discovered a long train of horsemen with their baggage, whom we could make out were not Persians, and whom as they approached we saw were Franks. They were accompanied by a *mehmander*, an officer from the Shah, who informed us, that this was the French embassy on its return, who it seems had been politely requested to take

its leave; and it was moreover added, that the English ambassador would very shortly take its place.

This at once explained how matters stood at court, and that between the rival bidders for his majesty's favour, the King of Kings had come to a good market. My ambassador was rather surprised how such a determination could have been taken previous to his arrival, fraught as he was with important information upon all the nations of Europe; but every difficulty is easily explained away when money is permitted to exert its eloquence, particularly if one recollects the words of the Sheikh—

> Let money only appear, and every head is prostrate.
> 'Tis thus, the heaviest weight in the scales lowers the iron beam.

We were happy to have an opportunity of observing the manners of a nation about whom we had lately heard so much, and as we passed the day together in the same

place, my chief did not fail to make himself known to the French ambassador.

We expected of course to find them much depressed in spirits, and in no good humour, having been driven as it were from the presence of the Earth's Centre; but what was our surprise to remark the contrary! Never did Persia see such a company of madmen. They were singing, dancing, and making the *lûti* all the livelong day. They all talked at once, one louder than the other, without any apparent deference to rank, for all seemed on the same footing. Without in the least respecting our carpets, they were eternally pacing them with rapid strides, and, what most shocked our feelings, spitting upon them. As I now looked upon myself in some measure identified with the Franks, considering at what pains I had lately been to acquire information concerning them, I endeavoured to discover if there was any affinity between their language and ours; but not a word could I comprehend. How-

ever, I thought to have made some progress in it, by recollecting and writing down the words in their speech which most frequently occurred—one was *sacré*—the other *Paris*—and a third *l'Empereur*.

On the whole we liked them. We thought to discern many points of similitude between them and ourselves; and were of opinion, that if as infidels they were doomed to the *douzak* of hereafter, even there, instead of moaning over and deploring their lot, they would still be found in the same happy mood we saw them at Sultanieh.

We parted on the following morning, they laughing, chattering, and screaming with joy; we, full of anxiety and apprehension about the reception with which our ambassador would meet from the King of Kings.

CHAPTER XXX.

The ceremony of receiving a Frank ambassador at the court is described.

My chief, the Mirza Firouz, was received with great condescension by the Shah, who was pleased at the ready answers he received to his numerous questions concerning the nations of Europe. Never was man better adapted to fill the situation to which he had been appointed than the Mirza. Every question which the Shah put to him was received with a ready answer. Ignorance did not confound him, no difficulty stopt him. The words '*nemi danum*,' I don't know, ever a sin in the hearing of a king, were never known to pass his lips. He discoursed upon every matter with a confidence that made his

hearers believe that whatever he said must be conclusive; and upon the subject of Europeans, to listen to him, one could not but suppose he had been born and bred among them.

As I was known to have been employed under him in 'seizing news,' as the phrase goes, concerning Europe, and also in writing its history, I in some measure enjoyed the reputation of being learned in whatever regarded its inhabitants. Although my assurance was nothing equal to my master's, yet I managed to answer the questions put to me with tolerable readiness, although, in so doing, I was obliged to be very circumspect not to commit him, therefore I passed my days in the double fear of appearing ignorant, and of having my ears cut off in case I happened to be too wise. However, as none among our own countrymen could contradict us, we were listened to as oracles, and we exemplified what the poet Al Miei has so justly remarked: 'That in the coun-

try of the dumb the sound of one voice, be it even that of an ass, would be called harmony.'

The English Elchi (ambassador) had reached Tehran a few days before we arrived there, and his reception was as brilliant as it was possible for a dog of an unbeliever to expect from our blessed Prophet's own lieutenant. Indeed the city was almost shocked at the honours paid him, and some of the most violent of our mollahs declared, that in treating a Giaour so well, we were ourselves in some measure guilty of his infidelity, and preparing our own damnation. At different stations on the road, the throats of oxen had been cut before his horses' feet, in many places his path was strewn with sugar-candy, and on the day of his entry he was permitted to have his trumpets sounded in the procession, all of which were honours that could be exacted by none, save our own princes.

Then all the proper attentions of hospitality were shown. The house of a khan

was taken from him and given to the ambassador, and whatever furniture was wanting was demanded from the neighbours and placed therein. A handsome garden was levied upon another, and added to the house. The lord high treasurer was commanded to feed the strangers at his own expense as long as they chose, and clothes and shawls were collected from the courtiers and servants of the court, for the dresses of honour which it is the custom to make on such occasions. The princes and noblemen were enjoined to send the ambassador presents, and a general command issued that he and his suite were the Shah's guests, and that, on the pain of the royal anger, nothing but what was agreeable should be said to them.

All these attentions, one might suppose, would be more than sufficient to make infidels contented with their lot; but, on the contrary, when the subject of etiquette came to be discussed, interminable difficulties seemed to arise. The Elchi was the most

intractable of mortals. First, on the subject of sitting. On the day of his audience of the Shah, he would not sit on the ground, but insisted upon having a chair; then the chair was to be placed so far, and no further, from the throne. In the second place, of shoes, he insisted upon keeping on his shoes, and not walking barefooted upon the pavement; and he would not even put on our red cloth stockings. Thirdly, with respect to hats: he announced his intention of pulling his off to make his bow to the king, although we assured him that it was an act of great indecorum to uncover the head. And then, on the article of dress, a most violent dispute arose: at first, it was intimated that proper dresses should be sent to him and his suite, which would cover their persons (now too indecently exposed) so effectually, that they might be fit to be seen by the king; but this proposal he rejected with derision. He said, that he would appear before the Shah of Persia in the very same dress he wore when

before his own sovereign. Now, as there was not a Persian who had ever been at the court of a Frank king, nobody could say what that proper dress was; and, for aught we knew, the Elchi might put on his bed-gown and night-cap on the occasion. This was a difficulty apparently not to be overcome, when, turning the subject over in my own mind, I recollected that among the paintings in the palace of Forty Pillars at Ispahan, there were portraits of Europeans, who, in the days of the great Shah Abbas, flocked to his court, and even established themselves in the city. In particular, I well recollected one in the very same painting in which Shah Abbas himself is represented, whose dress was doubtless the only proper costume to wear before a crowned head. I immediately suggested this to my master, who mentioned it to the grand vizier, who ordered that a copy of it should, without loss of time, be made by the best artist of Ispahan, and sent to Tehran.

So soon as it arrived it was officially presented to the English Elchi, with a notification that the Shah was satisfied to receive him in the same dress he wore before his own sovereign, a model of which was now offered to him, and to which it was expected that he and his suite would strictly conform.

The shouts of laughter which the infidels set up, upon seeing the picture and hearing the message, are not to be described. They asked if we thought them monkeys, that they should dress themselves as such at our bidding, and were so disagreeably obstinate in their resolution of keeping to their own mode of attire, that at length they were permitted to do as they chose.

The audience of the Shah passed off much better than could have been expected from such rude and uncivilized people, and we were all astonished that men, so unaccustomed to the manners and forms of the world, should have conducted themselves on this difficult occasion without committing

some act that was flagrant and improper. The king was seated on his throne of gold, dressed with a magnificence that dazzled the eyes of the strangers, and made even his subjects exclaim, 'Jemshîd? who was he? or Darab? or Nûshirvan? that they should be mentioned in the same breath?' On the right and left of the throne stood the princes, more beautiful than the gems which blazed upon their father's person. At a distance were placed the three viziers of the state, those depositaries of wisdom and good council; and, with their backs to the wall, each bearing a part of the paraphernalia of the crown, were marshalled in a row the black-eyed pages of royalty, who might be compared to angels supporting planets from the starry firmament. In the midst appeared the Franks, who, with their unhidden legs, their coats cut to the quick, their unbearded chins, and unwhiskered lips, looked like birds moulting, or diseased apes, or any thing but human creatures, when contrasted with the ample and splen-

didly dressed persons by whom they were surrounded. And they stood their ground, not in the least abashed by the refulgent presence of the great king; but their attitude, manner, and expression of countenance, would have made us suppose they were quite as good and as undefiled as ourselves.

The speech made on the occasion by the Elchi was characteristic of the people he represented; that is, unadorned, unpolished, neither more nor less than the truth, such as a camel-driver might use to a muleteer; and had it not been for the ingenuity of the interpreter our Shah would neither have been addressed by his title of King of Kings, or of the Kebleh of the Universe.

It would be taking up the pen of eternity were I to attempt to describe the boundless difference that we discovered between the manners and sentiments of these people and ourselves. Some of our sages endeavoured to account for it upon philosophical principles, and attributed much to the cli-

mate of those dark, watery, and sunless regions in which they were bred and born: 'for,' said they, 'how can men living surrounded by water, and who never feel the warmth of the sun, be like those who are never a day without enjoying the full effulgence of its rays, and do not even know what the sea means?' But the men of the law settled the question in a much more satisfactory manner, by saying 'it was owing to their infidelity that they were doomed to be cursed even in this life; and that if the ambassador, his suite, and even his whole nation, would submit to become Musulmans, and embrace the only true faith, they would immediately be like ourselves, their defilements would be washed clean, and they even might stand a chance of walking in the same story of the heavens as the genuine children of Islan would in the world to come.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hajji is noticed by the grand vizier, and is the means of gratifying that minister's favourite passion.

THE transactions just recorded were all propitious to my advancement. Owing to the knowledge I was supposed to have acquired respecting Europe, I was employed in most of the affairs which concerned the Franks in Persia, and this had furnished me with many opportunities of becoming known to the grand vizier, and to other ministers and men in power.

The Mirza Firouz was not rich, and the maintenance which he received in his public character ceasing as soon as he returned to Tehran, he could no longer afford to support me, and he was happy to find that I was able to work my own way into a livelihood. He did not fail to praise my good qualities, and never lost an opportunity of

extolling my abilities. Nor was I backward in seconding his endeavours, for I brought every thing and every person, infidels as well as true believers, to bear upon my ambitious views; and destiny (without whose aid man's endeavours are of no avail) almost as much as whispered, that the buffetings of the world had taken their departure from me.

The grand vizier was, without a doubt, the man in Persia who, from his acuteness, tact, and presence of mind, had the most influence over the Shah. He had enjoyed his high situation almost from the commencement of the present long reign, and had so interlaced his office with every transaction public as well as private, that his councils became as necessary to the country as the rising and setting of the sun.

To secure his protection became then the first object of my endeavours. I began by daily attending his levees and standing before him, and as the affairs relating to Europe now took up his principal attention,

he never saw me without asking some question referring thereto. This led to my being entrusted with messages to the English ambassador, the answers to which I always brought back, with something of my own surcharged, flattering to his abilities as a great statesman, and thus by creating good-will between the parties, I myself became a favourite.

The leading passion of the vizier was the love of receiving presents. This was my kebleh in all transactions with the Elchi, and my ingenuity was constantly exercised in endeavouring to extract something from him which would be acceptable to the vizier, and serviceable to myself. That presents of ceremony should be received and given was a matter of course, and therefore I stood no chance of acquiring any credit on such occasions; but I was once or twice accessory in making the balance strongly preponderate in favour of my own countrymen, and the vizier from that time

began to look upon me with a favourable aspect.

A treaty was to be negotiated between the two countries, and my patron was appointed one of the plenipotentiaries on the part of the Shah. Although this was matter in which one of my insignificance could not expect to be employed, yet I did not cease to ply about the negotiators, like a dog at an entertainment seeking for a chance bone; and every now and then I got so much of the scent as to make me almost sure of springing some game for myself.

At length, one morning, after a late sitting of the negotiators, I was summoned to attend the grand vizier in his very anderûn, a place to which none but his most confidential servants were ever admitted. I found him still in bed, bolstered up with many soft pillows, and entirely alone.

'Hajjî,' said he, in a familiar tone, 'draw near, and seat yourself close to me; I have something of importance to say.'

I was staggered by so high an honour; but as his command was law, I did not hesitate to kneel by his bed-side.

Without circumlocution, he at once told me that he was placed in a situation of great difficulty, for the English ambassador had made some demands impossible to be granted, and declared that he must quit Tehran, should they not receive our acquiescence.

'Now,' said he, 'the Shah has threatened if I permit the Elchi to leave Persia dissatisfied, that my head shall answer for it; and at the same time I and my brother plenipotentiary are half persuaded that his majesty will never accede to the demands of England. What is to be done?'

'Could he not be bribed?' said I, with all humility, and looking as if I would give other meaning to my words.

'*He* be bribed?' said the vizier; 'in the first place, whence could the bribe come? and in the second, these people are such fools, that they know not what a bribe

means. But, give me your ear. We are no fools, whatever they may be. The Elchi is very anxious to carry his point, and you know me well enough to be aware that there is nothing I cannot accomplish if once I take it in hand. You must go and talk to him. You are his friend. You may say that you are mine—you may whisper many things to him which I cannot—do you understand?'

Upon this I kissed his hand with much fervour, and raising it to my head I exclaimed, 'by my head and by my eyes, I will go—and Inshallah, please God, I will not return without a white face.'

He then dismissed me, and full of happy prospects I made the best of my way to the English ambassador.

I will not relate all I said and did to induce him to come into the grand vizier's terms; but in two words, I so entirely and completely succeeded, that I returned with a heavy sack of gold, of good and solid cash, in my hand, as the forerunner of

what was to follow in case all was concluded to the ambassador's satisfaction, and I also secured the promise of a large diamond ring that was forthwith to be transferred from the finger of England to that of Persia, by way of an emblem of eternal friendship between the representatives of the two states.

The vizier was so astonished when he saw me place the sack before him, that he looked at me and then at it, some time before he spoke, and then broke out into all sorts of exclamations in praise of my activity and zeal.

'Hajjî,' said he, 'you are now my property. We are somebody in Persia, and you will not long remain without a cap to your head. Make an *arz*, a representation, and its accomplishment will rest with me.'

Many were the protestations I made him of fidelity and redoubled zeal. I disowned any intention of asking for any remuneration, except the favour of being

permitted to stand before him; and I looked so humble, and talked in so disinterested a manner, that if he ever could have believed a Persian, I flattered myself he did me.

But he understood the value of such speeches a great deal better than I, and said, 'Do not throw away your words at random. I was once with my head turning round and round in the world for a livelihood as well as yourself, and therefore I know the value of the service which you have rendered. Proceed in the path which now lies before you. The Franks are proper materials for your ingenuity. I give you my sanction to work upon them. They have plenty of gold, and are in want of us. What more need be said? The people of Iran are like the earth; they require *rishweh**, their interests must be highly excited, before they will bring forth fruit. The Franks talk of feelings

* The word *rishweh*, bribery, is also used for *manure* in agriculture.

in public life of which we are ignorant. They pretend to be actuated by no other principle than the good of their country. These are words without meaning to us; for as soon as I die, or when the Shah is no more, all that we may have done for the welfare of Persia will most likely be destroyed; and when his successor shall have well ruined the people in securing himself, the whole business of improvement and consolidation must be gone over again. Certain privileges and enjoyments are the lawful inheritance of the Shahs of Persia: let them possess them in the name of Allah! And their viziers also have their allotted portion: why should they refuse them? Certainly not for the good of the country, because not one individual throughout the whole empire even understands what that good means, much less would he work for it.'

My mind was greatly enlightened by this speech, and as the curtain which hitherto had darkened my understanding drew up,

I discovered new prospects, and could extend my view over a new and more diversified region of profit. The words, 'the Franks are proper materials for your ingenuity' rung my ears, and my wits immediately began their career of invention.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of the manner in which he turned his influence to use, and how he was again noticed by the vizier.

I GAVE myself much pains to have it well understood in the city, that I was a confidential agent of the grand vizier, and did my best endeavour to impress upon the infidels that without my interference nothing could be done. The fruits of this proceeding were soon manifest, and my services put into requisition in a manner highly conducive to our mutual advantage.

One of the most remarkable features in the character of our English guests was their extreme desire to do us good against our inclination. Rather than not attempt it, they put themselves to infinite trouble, and even did not refrain from expense to secure their ends. They felt a great deal more for us than we did for ourselves; and

what they could discover in us worthy of their love, we, who did not cease to revile them as unclean infidels, and as creatures doomed to eternal fires, we were quite at a loss to discover. However, I had nothing to do with their tastes; my business was to study how to turn them to account, and the subject in all conscience was rich, and repaid me well for my trouble.

My readers will perhaps recollect that, in the first volume of this my narrative, I mentioned my acquaintance with an infidel doctor, who among other novelties in medicine, did his utmost endeavours to introduce into Persia a new mode of curing the small-pox. The practice was now totally laid aside; our faculty continued to treat the disorder as our forefathers had done, and the usual quantity of children died as heretofore. A doctor was also attached to the suite of the present Elchi, and he was impelled by more than common anxiety to do us good. His zeal to renew the practice of the cow medicine was unbounded, and the

quantity of mothers whom he enticed to bring their children to him astonishing.

I, in pursuit of my own schemes, was the first to cry out, that this great influx of women of the true faith, into the dwelling of an infidel, be the object what it might, was highly indecorous, and I persuaded the grand vizier to place an officer of the police as sentry at the doctor's door to prevent the women entering. This very soon stopped his practice, and he was in despair.

'But why should you grieve?' said I to him. 'You get nothing for your trouble, and the people are not obliged to you.'

'Oh,' said he, (for he and his countrymen had learnt our language) 'you know not what you say. This blessing must be spread throughout the world; and if your government stops it here, it will be guilty of the blood of all those lives which might have been saved.'

'What is that to us?' answered I: 'let them die—we get nothing by their being alive.'

'If it be profit that you require,' exclaimed the doctor, 'I will willingly pay any sum you may demand, rather than lose my vaccinating matter, which must dry up and be lost if my practice ceases.'

Here we entered into a negotiation, and after much difficulty and show of apprehension concerning the risk I ran of incurring the grand vizier's displeasure, it was agreed that for certain advantages which I should enjoy, the restriction should be taken from the doctor's house; and I leave those who know me to guess the numbers of children who now flocked to the man of medicine. His gate was thronged, and nothing more was said respecting the impropriety of the women's attendance.

Another of his manias was a desire to cut up dead bodies. He did so languish after every corpse that was carried by his house for burial, that I was surprised the people did not set upon him for his impure propensities.

'But what possible good will accrue to

mankind in general,' said I to him, 'if you dissect a dead Mussulman?

'It is impossible to say what good may be lost by my not dissecting him,' said he; 'besides, if I do not keep my hand in practice, I shall lose my former skill.'

He then of his own accord proposed to give a large sum for a corpse, and avowed that he was not particular about its quality, for that of a Jew, Christian, or a true believer, would be equally acceptable.

I kept this in remembrance; and indeed I had so many opportunities afforded me of advancing the designs of the infidels, and of filling my own pockets at the same time, that I felt myself gradually growing into wealth.

The ambassador himself was not without his desires of improving (as he called it) our state; and I cannot resist relating a circumstance which took place between him and the grand vizier. He announced it as his intention to make a present to us of a certain produce of the earth, unknown in

most parts of Asia, but much cultivated in Europe, which would not fail to be of incalculable benefit to the people of Persia; and he requested the vizier to assist him in his undertaking, promising shortly to send him a specimen of the intended gift. The vizier, whose nose was always carried very high whenever a present was in the wind, did not fail daily to discuss with me what this great benefit which the ambassador was about to confer might be, and his impatience to gain possession became very great. He discovered through me, that the English representative had brought with him a store of fine broad-cloth, upon which he had constantly kept a steady eye. Finding that the projected public benefit was not forthcoming, he conceived in his wisdom that the Elchi would have an easy bargain, if he agreed to commute it for a private gift to himself. Therefore, one morning at his uprising he called me, and said, 'By the blessing of God, whatever we want we have: we have bread, and meat

—we have salt, and rice, and corn, and fruits, such as the infidels never even saw in a dream; in short, we have every thing that it is possible to conceive. Then why should we become indebted to this infidel ambassador for things that we do not want? A happy thought has struck me, by which he will be a gainer, and be saved the trouble he wishes to incur: I will agree to receive cloth in lieu of the public benefit. This is so easy a transaction, that you, who, praise be to Allah! are a man of sharp wit, will easily negotiate. Go, say this to the ambassador, and without loss of time bring me the cloth.'

I forthwith presented myself, and delivered the message. Will it be believed that he and all his beardless suite, upon hearing it, set up such shouts of laughter, as might be heard from the top of Demawend? 'What affinity has cloth to potatoes?' said one. 'We wish to give a cheap and comfortable article of food to your countrymen,' said another. 'But it seems

that your vizier likes to transfer the whole advantage of the gift from the bellies of the nation to his own back,' cried a third. The ambassador, however, who appeared the most reasonable of the party, without hesitation very politely ordered a piece of cloth to be delivered to me, which he requested me to present to my master with reiterated expressions of friendship; and with the assurance that it could make no alteration in the sentiments which he entertained for the Persian nation, who he hoped would still receive the potatoe, as a mark of his high esteem and consideration.

I returned to the vizier full of exultation at the success of my visit; and this with the preceding and subsequent instances of my abilities, so entirely won his affections, that I soon outstript every rival, and became his principal favourite and confidant.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The conclusion. Misfortune seems to take leave of Hajji Baba, who returns to his native city a greater man than when he first left it.

The negotiations with the infidels were now about being closed; and it was agreed, in order to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two, that an embassy on the part of the Shah should forthwith be sent to the king of England.

The experience of each succeeding day convinced me of the influence I had acquired over the mind of the grand vizier; and the event just recorded was the means of showing me to what extent he depended upon my services and zeal. The day after the treaty with England was signed, he called me into his private apartment, and spoke to me in the following manner:

'Hajjî,' said he, 'give me your ear. I

have things of importance to impart, and as I look upon you as one exclusively mine, I am sure that you will listen to them with becoming attention.'

I was proceeding to make the necessary protestations of my entire devotedness, when he stopped me, and proceeded thus.

'Well or ill, our business with the English ambassador is at length concluded, and the Shah has ceded to his wishes of sending an ambassador to England in return. Now, you know the Persians as well as I, how they detest leaving their own country, and the difficulty I shall find in selecting a man to devote himself to this service. I have one in my eye, whom I wish to send above every other; and as it is of the utmost importance to me that he should be removed for the present from Persia, and particularly from the presence of the Centre of the Universe, I require that you use your best endeavours to persuade his acceptance of the appointment.'

I immediately felt assured that he could

mean no other than me, although I did not see what reason he could have for removing me from the presence of the king; and elated by so bright a prospect of sudden elevation to rank and honours, I sprung towards him, and seizing his hand with fervour to kiss, I exclaimed, 'The least of your slaves will always prove to be the most faithful of your servants: speak, and you will always find me ready, even to death.'

'That is well spoken,' said he, with great composure, and now listen to me. The man I allude to is Mirza Firouz, (here my countenance fell, and I drawled out in answer a long '*belli*, yes.') The truth is, I have lately discovered that his influence with the Shah has been considerably upon the increase. He possesses such great volubility of speech, and such vast command of language,—he flatters so intensely, and lies so profoundly,—that the king is more amused by him than by any other man of his court. Who knows how far he may go?

Besides, I am assured that secretly he is my most bitter enemy, whilst openly he affects to be my most devoted of servants; and although to this day I have never for a moment dreaded the hatred or the intrigues of any one, yet I cannot but own, that, in this instance, I am not without my fears. By sending him among the infidels, as the Shah's representative, I at once cut off the source of my uneasiness; and once let him be gone, I will so arrange matters, that even should he return successful from his mission (which please God, he never may!) he shall never acquire the influence over the Shah which he is now attempting to establish.'

I agreed to all he said without hesitation; and was losing myself in the reflection how I could possibly turn this piece of confidence to my own advantage, when the vizier accosted me again, and said,—

'I have only let you into one part of my scheme: the second object is, that you, Hajjî, should accompany the ambassador

in the capacity of his first mirza, or chief secretary. You, who are my friend and confidant, who know all my wishes, and who have an intimate knowledge of all that has occurred since the arrival of the infidels, you are precisely the man to fill this situation, and you will render me the greatest of services by accepting my proposal.'

However delighted I might have been at the prospect of becoming the chief of an embassy, yet when I was offered the inferior appointment, my feelings were very different. I felt that in quitting the situation I now enjoyed, I should leave the high road to preferment, to get into one of its crooked lanes. Besides, I strongly participated in the national antipathy, the horror of leaving one's country, and particularly dreaded the idea of going to sea; and when I came to reflect that the country to which I was likely to be sent was unknown land,—a land situated in eternal darkness, beyond the regions of the sun, and whose inhabitants were an unclean and

unbelieving race,—I drew back from the vizier's offer with the fear of one who had the gulf of perdition placed before him.

The answer I made to the prime minister was by a string of cold assents, such as constantly hang on every Persian's lips, whatever may be his real feelings. I said, 'By my eyes; I am your servant; my ear is in your hand; whatever you ordain I am bound to obey:'—and then remained mute as a stone.

The vizier easily discovered what passed within me, and said, 'If you dislike my offer, you are your own master, and another may easily be found to accept it. I have your advantage in view as well as my own. In the first place, you should immediately proceed to Ispahan, as the Shah's deputy, to collect a considerable portion of the presents intended to be sent by our court to the king of England, and which must be levied upon the inhabitants of that city. You would then have an opportunity of enriching yourself.'—

I did not let the vizier proceed further.

The temptation of returning to my native place in such a character, clothed with such powers, was too great to be withstood, and in a very altered tone I immediately exclaimed, with great earnestness—

'By the salt of your highness, by your death, and by the beard of the Shah, I am ready to go. No other word need be said,—I will go wherever you command, were it even to fetch the father of all the Franks from the inmost chambers of the world below.'

'Be it so,' said the vizier; 'and as the first step towards it, go at once to Mirza Firouz, flatter and assure him that he is the only man in Persia fit to be sent upon such an embassy, and persuade him of the advantages that will accrue to him. Honour, riches, the good will of the Shah, and my protection all will abound; and at his return, God best knows to what heights he may not ascend. Throw out hints that some other man, some rival, whom you may discover, has been talked of for the situa-

tion, and you will see how easily he will swallow the bait. Go, and Allah be with you!'

I left his presence scarcely knowing whether I soared in the heavens, or trod on the earth. 'What,' said I to myself, 'shall I then attain the summit of all earthly happiness,—shall my long past prognostics at length be fulfilled,—and shall I indeed enter my native place, clothed with the *kalaat* of honour, armed with the hand of power, and mounted upon the steed of splendour? Let those who once scorned Hajjî Baba, the barber's son, now beware, for they will have to deal with the Shah's deputy. Let those crowns, which once submitted to my razor, now be prostrate, for he who can cut the head off is at hand. Ye that have deprived me of my inheritance tremble, for the power of making you restore it is mine.'

Indulging in such like feelings, I am aware that I strutted along the street with a swell and dignity of manner, which must

have surprised every one who saw me. I could think of nothing save my approaching honours; and my mind was riveted by the one idea of seeing myself mounted on a finely caparisoned horse, adorned by a gold chain round its neck, and a silver tassel under its throat, preceded by my led horses, and my running footmen, and greeted by a deputation from the governor of the city, to welcome my arrival in my native place.

However, I proceeded to the house of Mirza Firouz, whom I found prepared to converse on the subject of the embassy, because, it seems, that the English Elchi had already made proposals to him to the same effect as those which the grand vizier intended to make. Although I had attached myself almost exclusively to the service of the prime minister, yet I always persevered in my friendship with the intended ambassador, who was very glad to hear that I was to accompany him. We talked long upon our future plans, as well

as upon our past adventures, and when, roaring with laughter, he asked whether I should now endeavour to regain possession of my faithless Shekerleb, I slipped away, not over-pleased to have that event of my life recalled to my recollection.

The next day, the Shah announced at the public audience his intention of sending Mirza Firouz to England as his representative, and the grand vizier ordered me to be in readiness to proceed to Ispahan, as soon as the proper firmans necessary to arm me with power should be prepared.

I will not tire the reader with a description of the numerous details of my preparatives for this expedition. He would sicken and I should blush at my vanity. It is sufficient to say that I travelled to Ispahan with all the parade of a man of consequence; and that I entered my native city with feelings that none but a Persian, bred and born in the cravings of ambition, can understand. I found myself at the summit, of what, in my eyes, was perfect

human bliss. Misfortune seemed to have taken its leave, and every thing informed me that a new chapter in the book of my life was about to open. Hajjî Baba, the barber's son, entered his native place, as Mirza Hajjî Baba, the Shah's deputy. Need I say more?

AND here, gentle Reader! the humble translator of the Adventures of Hajjî Baba presumes to address you, and profiting by the hint afforded him by the Persian story-tellers, stops his narrative, makes his bow, and says, 'Give me encouragement, and I will tell you more. You shall be informed how Hajjî Baba accompanied a great ambassador to England, of their

adventures by sea and land, of all he saw, and all he remarked, and of what happened to him on his return to Persia.' But he begs to add, should he find, like Hajjî's friend the third Dervish, he has not yet acquired the art of leading on the attention of the curious, he will never venture to appear again before the public until he has gained the necessary experience to ensure success. And so he very humbly takes his leave.

P. P.

THE END.

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